

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

James Evans, Jr.

The Graduate School
Morehead State University
March 17, 2014

ROLE OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IN DISTRICT TURNAROUND

Abstract of capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

James Evans, Jr.

Beattyville, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. David Barnett, Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

March 17, 2014

Copyright © James Evans, Jr. March 17, 2014

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IN DISTRICT TURNAROUND

The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the role of the superintendent in the turnaround process in persistently low achieving school districts. This research identified common threads, principles, and suggestions on turnaround processes and the role of the superintendent through examination of research on leadership and school turnaround processes. This author, a superintendent in a Kentucky public school district at the time of the research, adopted a case study approach for this capstone project. In order to carry out the research, all of Kentucky's public school district superintendents were surveyed. Surveys were analyzed by method of content and survey analysis. The researcher also conducted a follow-up study using a focus group of Kentucky superintendents. The findings of the study helped in developing recommendations for the effective role of the school superintendent in the school district turnaround process. The results of the study suggest effective improvement strategies for school superintendents.

KEYWORDS: District Turnaround, School Turnaround, District Level Leaders, School Culture, School Superintendents

Candidate Signature

Date

ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IN DISTRICT TURNAROUND

By

James Evans, Jr.

Approved by

Jeff Hawkins	3/17/2014
Committee Member	Date

Rocky Wallace	3/17/2014
Committee Member	Date

David Barnett	3/17/2014
Committee Member	Date

David Barnett	3/17/2014
Committee Chair	Date

David Barnett	3/17/2014
Director of EdD	Date

Chris Miller	3/17/2014
Department Chair	Date

RULES FOR THE USE OF CAPSTONES

Unpublished capstones submitted for the Doctor's degree and deposited in the Morehead State University Library are as a rule open for inspection, but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but quotations or summaries of parts may be published only with the permission of the author, and with the usual scholarly acknowledgements.

Extensive copying or publication of the capstone in whole or in part also requires the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of Morehead State University.

A library that borrows this dissertation for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

Name

DateThis image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

CAPSTONE

James Evans, Jr.

The Graduate School

Morehead State University

March 17, 2014

ROLE OF SUPERINTENDENT IN DISTRICT TURNAROUND

Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

James Evans, Jr.

Beattyville, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. David Barnett, Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

March 17, 2014

Copyright © James Evans, Jr. March 17, 2014

UMI Number: 3619206

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3619206

Published by ProQuest LLC (2014). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Roxanne and my two sons, Michael and Wesley, who I love without measure. Without their support, patience and encouragement I would have never been able to succeed in this process. I would also like to include the students and staff that I serve each and every day. Hopefully I'm making an impact that will forever change lives much as mine has been through education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the instruction, leadership, and guidance provided by my chair, Dr. David Barnett. His willingness to assist in this process has been an invaluable resource. Dr. Jeff Hawkins for his friendship and advice through the process and Dr. Rocky Wallace for his strong support and encouragement. I also wish to thank Morehead State University for its dedication and leadership in providing educational opportunities for all of Kentucky but more specifically those in Eastern Kentucky. Morehead State University's Ed.D program and its focus on action research has strengthened my professional journey as an educator. I can only hope that my documented journey and research on school turnaround can encourage others who are facing the process. I would also like to thank my friend and colleague, Dr. Timothy Bobrowski for his encouragement and assistance throughout this process. At times this journey has been intensely difficult and required more patience than I had to give, but I sustained my efforts and saw it through. I will proudly display my degree gained from Morehead State University and count this as one of my life's invaluable memories.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	13
Background of the Research	15
Theoretical Background.....	18
Statement of the Problem.....	20
Research Questions	23
Aims and Objectives of the Study	23
Rationale of the Study.....	24
Capstone Meant to Impact	25
Limitations of the Capstone	26
Reflections	27
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	29
Defining Turnaround	29
Funding	31
Measuring Success	33
Setting the Bar.....	36
Timeline to Success	37
Defining Success for School System	39
Finding and Sharing Best Practices	40
Turnaround Key Players	41
States and Districts	41
Building the Capacity to do Turnaround Work	42
Leading the Change	45
Impacts of Superintendent's Role on District Level Leaders	47
Implications and their Resolutions for the Future	48
Culture.....	49
Sustainability Factors	55
What Outcomes Are Achieved	56
Role of School Superintendent in School Turnaround via Data Analysis.....	57

What Forms of Data Are Important to Collect	57
Importance of Data Analysis for Successful Turnaround.....	60
Superintendent's Effort.....	61
Role of School Superintendent in Building Capacity within Staff.....	63
Re-Defining Beliefs and Vision.....	63
Engaging in the Work	64
Alignment of Roles, Rules, and Relationships with Beliefs and Visions	65
Importance of Staff Replacement in School Turnaround	67
Training of the School Staff.....	68
Developing Effective Leaders	69
Assessing Teacher Performance	70
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	72
Research Strategy.....	72
Research Design	74
Qualitative Research Methodology	75
Quantitative Research Methodology	77
Research Approach	78
Data Collection	78
Data Analysis	80
Population Group or Focused Population	81
Reliability and Validity	82
Ethical and Confidentiality Considerations	83
Informed Consent	84
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis	86
Case Study of Lee County School District	86
The Major Responsibilities of Superintendents in School Turnaround	87
Skills - Strengthening the Role of Superintendents in School Turnaround ..	88
Analysis of Superintendent's Role in Kentucky District	89

Setting up a Vision for Lee County School District	94
Findings.....	95
Survey Information of Superintendents	97
Chapter 5: Conclusion	102
Recommendations.....	104
My Conclusions as Superintendent Prior and During School Turnaround ...	109
References.....	121
Appendices.....	129
Vita.....	132

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

In 2001, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted through federal legislation to ensure standards-based education reform. A portion of NCLB outlined procedures for identifying districts and schools that failed to achieve growth and success under Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The schools were identified in order to enable actions that will use four models of turnaround for increasing student achievement.

Several reforms in the education sector were introduced in 2009, when President Obama declared that \$5 billion be granted for the purpose of bringing turnaround in the nation's 5,000 poorest-performing schools before 2012. Turnaround was perceived as an enormous challenge at that time. Related research projects offer a number of examples of turning around schools individually, with powerful improvement in the system. However, for this research, the question was how to improve the schools at state and district level. There was a need in public education for dramatic change on a large scale (Hoekstra, 2010). Even years after President Obama announced the grant; the challenge existed in developing the policies together with better implementation processes.

The way districts administered new policies was followed by debate, planning measures, and dialogue among stakeholders. One and one half years after the grant, the process of turnaround is constructed on practical implementation together with the

action plan rather than dialogues and debates (Schaffer, Reynolds, & Stringfield, 2012).

Listed below is information about the four models of school turnaround. Superintendents and local boards of education are given options to choose one of the four to implement during the turnaround process. This superintendent and the researcher for this project chose the transformational model. The four models allowed include the following.

1. Transformational Model- focuses on measurable improvement and professional growth of teachers and staff.
2. Re-Staffing Model- involves replacing 50% of the teachers and any principals who have been at the school more than three years.
3. Educational Management Organization- requires bringing in an external management company or organization to run the school.
4. Closing of the school (The School Turnaround Field Guide, Federal Strategy Group, 2010)

In the school district where this researcher serves as superintendent, the transformational model guided the change. In this model, there was a need to replace leadership starting with the school principal and the site-based council. The superintendent would choose a replacement for the school principal and the Commissioner of Education would replace the School-Based Decision Making Council with an Advisory Council. Internally in a school, teachers would be trained as leaders who are skilled on the turnaround process and knowledgeable on effective

practices (Herman, 2012). In short, the process began with removing the principal and allowing the superintendent to hire the replacement who was skillful in management, instructional leadership, the school processes, and leadership practices for improving the education and learning for students.

Background of the Research

According to data presented by the United States Department of Education (School Turnaround Field Guide, 2010) schools characterized by high poverty cultures did not make progress. In fact, the US Department of Education reported that, there were 5,000 schools with more than 2.5 million children in different districts where turnaround models needed to be implemented. The students in these districts are at risk of receiving a woefully inadequate education. Findings revealed that out of 100,000 schools, 5% of them need immediate reform (Peck & Reitzug, 2013). These schools failed to attain success according to AYP for five or more years and often had high staff turnover, high rates of violence, and low graduation rates (School Turnaround Field Guide, 2010).

The Appalachian Region Commission has identified a lack of education with higher number of dropouts, increased poverty rates, low lifetime earnings, an increase in the use of substance abuse, bad health conditions, and an increased rate of incarceration (Leithwood, 2012). The consequences of the lower rates of success in schools impacts society in the form of lower rates of tax revenue, a decline in the gross domestic product, and issues in health services, criminal activities, and social balance.

After studying the reported trends by collecting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), from 2008-2015 by the Foundation Strategy Group, a conclusion was reached by the United States Department of Education, that the number of schools needing serious intervention for turnaround will increase from 5,017 to 12,000 at a growth rate of 143% (see Table 1).

Table1

Increase of PLA schools over time.

	2008- 09	2009- 10	2010- 11	2011- 12	2011- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15
School Improvement	5,681	5,600	5,500	5,400	5,200	5,100	5,000
Corrective Action	1,899	2,100	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,900	1,900
Restructuring	5,017	6,100	7,200	8,300	9,500	10,800	12,200

Source : Public Impact, 2007.

Data collected in 2008-2009 indicated 11 states where 75% of the PLA schools were concentrated. These states include Massachusetts, New York, Florida, California, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. There were at least 100 schools in each of the states that needed turnaround (School Turnaround Field Guide 2010).

The word turnaround has different meanings when defined in the context of education, policy building, and educational development. Generally, it is identified as the process involving the improvement of schools or the district and individual level for enhancing the performance system. In the context of educational

development, turnarounds are identified in the context of “turnaround model.”

Turnaround models were used by this researcher as an important area of interest in order to access implementation plans. Re-starting schools from scratch is perhaps the most difficult of the models, as it requires huge investment and rehiring of the school’s new staff. (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012).

Since the school superintendent is the chief education officer, he/she must develop an insight within an educational entity or organization. The role of the school superintendent is influential when it comes to the success or the performance of the district, schools, and students. School superintendents fulfill their role at the local level by leading, modeling, and teaching the board, parents, students, community, and other stakeholders. The school superintendent is regarded as the chief education officer. School superintendents develop an insight into the administrative oversight of the students, public schools, and educational services within the identified vicinity or geographical location. They play the role of leader for bringing reforms in low-performance areas and develop insight into the performance in the community, schools, and districts (Clifford, 2013).

In the role of policy maker and implementer, superintendents are regarded as capacity builders in order to enhance the performance and successful turnaround of schools. According to Schlechty (2002), school superintendents need to play their role as a capacity builder for the staff; they can work on common visions and beliefs of growth. Further, Schlechty argued that it is the responsibility of superintendents to

ensure that those in these roles act on the district's beliefs, vision, and core purpose of schools (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010).

Theoretical Background

According to Duffy (2006), to successfully turn around a school, leaders must have the knowledge about the actual system and the functions that are carried out under it. Having the required skills of using a particularly created protocol is essential for directing the change in the whole system of a school. In his study, Duffy (2004) compared systems of schools and nature. He concluded that triumphant organisms become accustomed to their surroundings after sprouting to a climax of accomplishment at which the organism is modified to its surroundings. Similar processes followed in successful turnarounds since the peaks of performance evolved in school turnarounds.

The role of interconnections in a school turnaround is strained when the whole system is undertaken by the use of a systematic approach or systematic thinking. A systems approach also focuses on generating circular feedback instead of one-way causes. This approach compares systems' thinking to the human body; both have parts, and each of these parts work together to affect the performance of the whole while still working interdependently of each other (Miller-Williams & Kristonis, 2010).

Kowal, Hassel, and Hassel (2009) studied school districts that made significant improvements. Their research revealed that a turnaround is possible, but difficult. Turnaround processes often cause controversy due to the removal of current

leaders, or large policy changes, and have a 70% failure rate (Beer & Nohria, 2000). However, Beer and Nohria (2000) reported that this high failure rate is often caused by premature ceasing of turnaround efforts. Often, repeated attempts and a large time commitment are necessary for a successful turnaround process to be completed.

Herman et al. (2008) stated that one of the most important parts of the turnaround strategy is the selection of an effective leader. Traits of a successful turnaround leader include problem solving skills, a desire for strong results, and confidence. A turnaround leader connects learning goals and classroom activity, influences others to get results, and stays focused, even as people tear them apart for replacing the previous leader. Turnaround leaders are willing to take drastic action in order to get results. There is a need to break the norm, experiment heavily for working strategies, and push staff towards the new methods. These methods should achieve rapid results and quickly silence critics. These turnaround leaders need to be given a bit of leeway to try new strategies, they still need to be held accountable for success. Districts need to set clear goals for turnarounds and expect large improvements in one year, with more in year two. They also need to monitor and report results, which would help spur progress (Herman et.al, 2008; Public Impact, 2007).

Miller-Williams and Kritsonis (2010) argued for a different type of reform called Comprehensive School Reform (CSR). CSR focuses on reorganizing and rejuvenating schools instead of pushing a large number of uncoordinated improvement initiatives. According to Department of Education (The School

Turnaround Field Guide, 2010), a CSR program must incorporate the following important points:

1. Utilization of well-established and sound techniques for generating effective learning, teaching, and management. These methods must be in line with the scientific research and must follow the practices that have resulted in successful turnarounds in other schools.
2. Integration of teaching, evaluation, classroom administration, specialized growth, parent participation, and school management with each other.
3. Availability of incessant and superior training for the teachers of a school.
4. Inclusion of quantifiable aims for enhancing academic achievement and thereby establishing benchmark for those aims and objectives.
5. Providing support for the staff of school.

According to Sa and Thompson (2005), the help of implementing just one element of success cannot turn around a system successfully. The success for a school turnaround is multifaceted and requires the integration of many required elements. Culture is, no doubt, a primary element that effects the growth and successful turnaround in K-12 public education. Organizational culture is made up of shared beliefs, history, assumptions, norms, and values that manifest themselves in patterns of behavior – or, as the cliché goes, “It’s the way we do things around here.”

Statement of the Problem

Since 2001 and primarily because of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, many school districts in the United States have been identified as low performing.

Kentucky Administrative Regulation 703 KAR 5:225 uses the term “Persistently Low Achieving” (PLA) to label these schools and makes the determination of whether or not a school is PLA based on the lowest 5% of schools’ test scores.

This researcher conducted an analysis to examine whether or not these commonalities of the role of the superintendent in the turnaround processes was reflected in Kentucky’s turnaround process. This research identified common threads, principles, and suggestions on turnaround processes and the role of the superintendent through an examination of current research on leadership and change processes.

The foundational purpose of this research study was to look at the role of the superintendent in turnaround and PLA schools and districts. Moreover, there are many states where the ratio of schools’ underperformance vs. over-performance is higher, including Kentucky. There is an urgency to improve the performance system of these schools so that all students are educated equally and are able to perform well. The Lee County School District (LCSD) was the focus of the study. LCSD includes two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The Lee County High School was deemed PLA following four years of declining assessment in reading and math as shown in the table below.

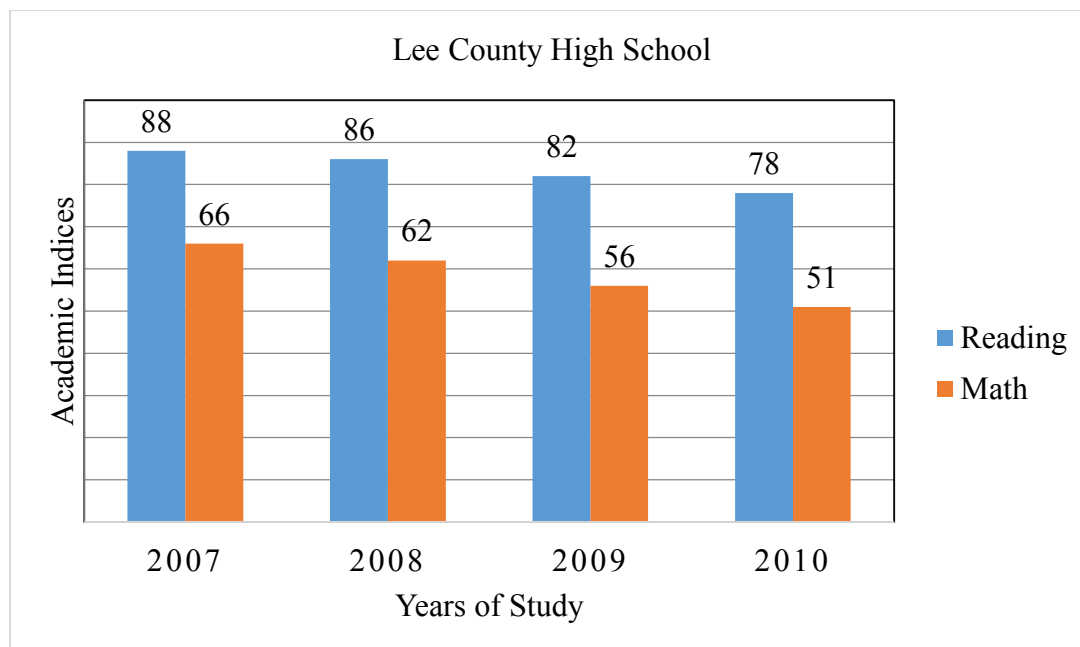


Figure 1. The chart above represents the reading and math scores for Lee County High School from 2007 through 2010. Source: Kentucky Department of Education, 2010.

The above results from the reading and the mathematics study provides information regarding the scores of the students from 2007-2010. The scores reflect that student academic performance has been continuously declining. There is a need to adopt strategies and methods to improve the position and performance of Lee County High School (LCHS).

The process of turnaround in schools requires development and effort on the management scale in order to develop effective leadership. In order to successfully implement this process and improve these schools, school superintendents need to play an active role in ensuring that effective and best practice instruction is in place in every classroom, every day. Given this requirement, it is important to explain the

role of the school superintendents in the district turnaround. As noted previously, this research project used LCSD as the local context in order to identify barriers to sustain improved student achievement and to identify specific strategies school superintendents may adopt in district turnaround process.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies adopted by school superintendents in order to improve the performance of a school that falls under the category of persistently low achieving?
2. What are commonalities in the current research on the role of the superintendent in the turnaround processes?
3. What strategies apply specifically to and work well in isolated rural districts?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This capstone identified the role of the school superintendent in the district turnaround process. Moreover, it further focused on the characteristics of low performing schools and their assigned leaders of change. Additionally, there was a need to determine whether there were commonalities such as communication, vision, data analysis, systems and thought process in the current research. Further, the research aimed to find the following supportive objectives.

1. Determine whether there are commonalities in the current research on the role of the superintendent in the turnaround processes.
2. Identify common threads, principles, and suggestions on turnaround processes and the turnaround model for implementing it in schools through a focused population.
3. Study the implementation of the turnaround model in the past through the case study and then study its impact through data and results.
4. Identify successful strategies for the process of turnaround through a case study.
5. Identify the factors contributing to Persistently Low Performance (PLA) schools and the reforms that are initiated by introducing the role of effective school superintendents.
6. Evaluate the role of the superintendent through an examination of research on leadership and changes processes.

Rationale of the Study

This research sought to identify persistently low performance issues with school practices designed to increase student achievement and analyze improvement strategies administered by the superintendent. The process of turnaround in schools has been analyzed and researchers have identified a number of common roles carried out by successful school leaders (Fairchild & DE Mary, 2011; Herman & Winters, 2010; Kwalwasser, 2012; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010; Papa & English, 2011). Given the solid research base, there are a number of successful strategies

school superintendents leading a turnaround effort should follow. (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). This research project was a case study that aimed to find if improvement efforts implemented by a superintendent in a turnaround district were effective.

The researcher used a focused population for the purpose of this study. The focus was Lee County School District, which is a K-12 public school system serving approximately 1,100 students. The researcher, who is also the superintendent of this district, conducted focus group surveys and the results of which were utilized to provide recommendations for development and implementation of turnaround plans. The study can be used when implementing the turnaround model in the Lee County School District. Moreover, the study can also be helpful in defining roles and responsibilities that can be implemented by superintendents in district turnaround.

The survey given to superintendents, highlights experiences they have encountered and characteristics exhibited in leading school districts. The capstone identified common threads, principles, and suggestions on turnaround processes and the role of the superintendent through an examination of research on leadership and the change processes.

Capstone Meant to Impact

The researcher used the identified population, or focus group, in order to identify the local context of the study.

The analysis and the results of the study will hypothetically affect the selected population and the growth of schools in this district. The researcher will identify the

multiple roles in the turnaround process of the school superintendent in the Lee County School District. The selected district is a K-12 public school system serving approximately 1,100 students (over 75% free and reduced lunch). The district consists of a high school, a middle school, and two elementary schools. Lee County has a population, with 80% of the total population being over 18 years of age. The economic condition is regarded as one factor having a major impact on the district. Lee County is located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and is one of the most scenic areas of Kentucky. According to the County Economic Status in Appalachia, FY 2011, (from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011), and Eastern Kentucky was comprised of 43 counties. Lee County was labeled as distressed in 2011.

It is intended that the results of the study be used as an instrument in the development and the district turnaround process carried out in Lee County. The reforms introduced in the educational system are not only expected to improve the existing conditions but also the unemployment, poverty rate, and college and career readiness of its students. Further, the capstone also assessed the existing conditions of the region and the current role of school superintendents for the purpose of successful district turnaround.

Limitations of the Capstone

There are various limitations identified in this research project. First, the researcher only used the Lee Country School District. Therefore, the identified results obtained from the strategies for improving the school performance may be

applicable to this district only. The results of the study are limited to the identified population since the results can vary from one county, region, district, or state to the other.

Moreover, the researcher limited the study within the identified scope by explaining the role of the superintendents in district turnaround. The researcher only accessed the superintendent's role and therefore limited the study with the responsibilities placed on the superintendent for the process of turnaround. The secondary research in the study was limited to the use of literature on the identified topic and with the objectives of the research. The results are also limited to identify education level in schools, and therefore the strategies and the methods cannot be used for any other educational institutions. The researcher is also the superintendent of the district and this is also a limitation.

Reflections

The study is based on quantitative and qualitative research carried out in order to define the successful role of school superintendents in district turnaround. The researcher adopted different approaches and strategies to carry out the capstone project. The researcher used a case study, surveys, and a focus group interview approach through triangulating the results with surveys and literature from the past researches. The Lee County School District and Kentucky superintendents were selected as the focused population and case study in order to study the role of the school superintendent in the district turnaround. Further, the data collected were decoded by the method of content analysis. The data of the study and the results

discussed in the conclusion and therefore include the results for the purpose of future strategies and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Defining Turnaround

There have been many efforts made in order to define the term turnaround in schools, but the definition suggested by Schaffer, Reynolds & Springfield (2012) provided the pillar for the foundation of this study. According to their definition: Turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization. Turnaround can be defined as the efforts that have been carried out in order to manage the performance system in the school overall. The process of the turnaround is not limited to the role of the teacher and the administration of the schools but also the whole district, superintendents, and other leadership to carry it out smoothly in order to improve the performance of the school in whole district or state (Clifford, 2013).

The improvement in performance of schools after turnarounds has been measured in different areas. The criteria of measuring success and identifying the turnaround in school districts developed in many studies, but unfortunately, the methods have not been successfully identified. In order to keep on target with turnaround procedures in a district, strong emphasis was given by different stakeholders and has identified the best method of achieving the turnaround. According to the stakeholders, the process of turnaround is best achieved with the same population residing in the identified district area. There are two main categories

(school and system level) of measuring success in the school turnaround (Duke, Carr, & Sterrett, 2012).

Turnaround at the school level is measured by accessing students' outcomes in the schools and different cultures of the schools, as well introducing the improvement in the learning environment. Further, the application and the implementation of absolute value added measurements developed the plan for turnarounds and the working plans for the purpose of success and growth in next two-three years can be important in this regard. The idea is to develop success and growth at the school level and to implement turnaround for the growth and improvement of students (Schaffer et al., 2012). Many factors play an important role for turnaround in schools.

The system level turnaround is identified as setting goals for the students, schools, districts, and states by making improvements on the system levels. The turnaround was achieved by keeping a record or track of the performance of the students and schools collectively. This record helps in accessing the performance of a district on the system level by measuring the self-performance and carried out in order to support turnaround on the system level (Clifford, 2013).

The current investments by the United States Department of Education in the education sector are substantial. These investments are also in line with the core needs of the different communities and districts for funding, which have generated a very strong position for the United States Department of Education to make significant changes in education policy and to set the prospects in turnaround

strategies. These strategies were used at local, state, and national levels of education. Despite the fact that the investments in the education sector are high, most of them are short termed (McGuinn, 2013). The short-term nature of these investments has caused concern for local and state level agencies in sustaining their turnaround efforts.

Funding

The federal government granted \$4.35 billion to the states and the US DoE under the banner of competitive grants for schools, where turnaround is one of the main four interventions. Race to the Top Funds which provides competitive grants to encourage and reward states for innovation in education have already allowed the state level and district level regulations accompanied by changes in schools and districts (Schmidt-Davis, & Bottoms, 2012).

The federal government granted \$3.55 billion to the states based on Title-I funding levels. This funding was granted as competitive funding to districts within each state. School Improvement Grant guidelines are in accordance with the Race to the Top and include the needs of districts using the four models of turnaround (Duke, 2012).

A federal \$65 billion, competitive grant allocated to school districts, with an aim to enlarge creative approaches based on evidence, for considerably improving and enhancing the achievement of students, integrating those concerned with school turnaround (Duke, 2012).

There is a need to understand the importance of the district turnaround and the models that were used for developing a framework. The United States Government has used a dramatic approach rather than incremental one; therefore, the government has used Local Education Associations for providing new methods of performance to schools. These are as follows.

The Re-staffing Model is the approach based on the method of replacing the school principals who have been at the school more than three years and the replacement of 50% of the school staff. The Model is carried out by granting certain rights and facilities to the principal like budgeting, staffing, calendars, and schedules. The Model uses a comprehensive approach of turnaround when it is being compared to substantial methods for improving student's outcomes and approaches (Duke, 2012).

The Education Management Organization approach is based on the idea of bringing in an external management company or organization to run the school. The School Closures approach is based on closing the schools with bad performance and then re-registering the student in some other reputable school under LEA (Jehlen, 2012).

The Transformational approach is based on the measurable improvement and professional growth of teachers and staff. It also introduces an approach based on community based schooling in the particular district through the provision of operational flexibility.

The challenge for this approach lies in the acceptance of these models within a school system and being challenged at different platforms. Cost, human capital, provider capacity, and political support are questioned on greater extent, to determine if implementing these reforms will be helpful in effective turnarounds (Jehlen, 2012). It has been found that Transformational Model is widely implemented, but on the other hand has shown to be least effective in turning around schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2013). The challenge lies in the configuration of schools in the district as to which is the best model of turnaround, where the teachers and the students will perform best. Furthermore, there is the challenge in the using the model for the best alignment at an appropriate scale. One important factor in the alignment of low performing schools is good leadership qualities and bringing stakeholders along and involving them in the development of turnaround in a school district (Leithwood, 2012).

States have developed different turnaround policies together with school superintendents for improving district turnaround which all align with federal requirements. Moreover, districts selected for turnaround will involve the superintendents of schools, support providers, and the school administrators (Peck & Reitzug, 2013). Direct interventions will help in connecting good leadership practices in the process of decision-making and policymaking. It will also promote the role of superintendents as part of policymaking.

Measuring Success

Many states and districts have taken the required initiatives to develop and implement the criteria for identifying the need of turnaround in schools. (School

Turnaround Field Guide, 2010) However, clarity regarding tracking the methods by which the process of turnaround effort can be questioned is still missing from the information collected. The knowledge of the turnaround methods after identifying the geographic region that needs improvement is very essential for adopting effective strategies and policies (Muijs & Chapman, 2013).

Turnaround helps in improving the whole education system. In this regard, it is important to find the factors of success for a school and district. The expectations regarding the outcomes of the turnaround efforts are important as they drive the success of a school. Academic gains in student assessment are achieved once goals and strategies are outlined concerning what is actually wanted as improvements (Herman, 2012).

Four themes are used for measuring success at the school level. These four themes are described below.

Provisional development and results are two very important essentials to be tracked by schools, with respect to not only school culture, but also student performance. The environment in this context comprises the culture of the school where turnaround efforts are being made (Muijs & Chapman, 2013), the connectivity and communication between different hierarchies of the school's leadership, and the link between teacher and school leadership (Herman, 2012). Students' performance incorporates the progress and outcomes produced by the students. According to beliefs of stakeholders and many scholars, a turnaround is considered successful if improvement can be achieved with the same school population (Zavadsky, 2012).

Decreased rates of violence and suspension, increased attendance of both faculty and the students, decreased rates of student dropouts, and greater retention of effective staff are among the most prominent school environment metrics that indicate the progress of a school (Zavadsky, 2012). Similarly, the student performance metrics, indicating the progress of a student, include increased performance levels of students on influential assessments, improvements in test results, and greater rates of graduation (Leithwood et al., 2010). It is important that results are not only examined and assessed in absolute terms, but also are well benchmarked against previous student performance and forthcoming student performance, with the help of utilizing value added measures (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007).

For a school that is undergoing the process of turnaround, it is very important that timely access to information related to student performance be available for the school administration, teachers, students, superintendent, and stakeholders. Access to information helps ensure successful implementation of school turnaround. Relying on annual data is not sufficient, as it is too late to account for annual data assessment (Leithwood et al., 2010). In fact, early warning systems must be implemented for developing data regarding students' performance on regular basis. Such a system requires greater investments, but for achieving successful school turnaround, early-warning systems assist superintendents in gathering knowledge about progress. They also assist in forecasting the extent for measuring schools and students' progress. The

schools, in which turnaround processes have been successfully implemented, have improved deficits with the effective and on-going use of student data (Elmore, 2007).

Graduation requirements are also improved by implementing this strategy. The use of both modern and traditional methods means that the arena of school turnaround needs new cross content measures that surpass the scores of tests for evaluating students' performance, communication between the students and teachers, and enhancements in critical thinking (Elmore, 2007).

Other data from staff, parents, and students in which information related to the progress of school turnaround method implementation can be gathered and later assessed. Meanwhile, for a successful school turnaround, effective processes of assessment and evaluation are essential. Assessments help in comparing the past and current standing of the school in terms of progress. It also provides assistance in learning about the methods that can enhance the progress of schools (Hoekstra, 2010). However, many scholars believe that this is a big challenge since known measures involve uneven levels of complexity and are frequently erratically composed across schools, districts, and states (Blanchard, 2006).

Setting the Bar

Setting the standard for a school turnaround is very important and has been under a lot of debate in the public as well as the school environment. Many in the educational field believe that if the bar of standards is set too high, then it would be difficult for most of the schools to achieve it, and consequently all the efforts of school turnaround may be considered as total failure. On the other hand, many are of

the belief that if the standards are set low, it will result in un-aggressive efforts and will not help in achieving the desired goals. There are many options for setting a standard bar. Some believe that Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an optimum point to start (Blanchard, 2006).

However, many believe that goals that are more ambitious should be set so that drastic achievements can be ensured, such as a 50% enhancement in the rates of graduation or double-digit gains on state performance tests. In fact, many schools have set their target to 85% of graduates enrolled in college or technical schools. Many scholars and education analysts say that even larger gain setting is not sufficient (Glickman, 2002). This belief is because when compared with other succeeding and progressing schools, the gap must be eliminated, and for this, effective strategies must be implemented. This gap can be eliminated with the help of different measures, including exit exams, standardized assessments, ACT/SAT scores, and graduation rates (Sa & Thompson, 2005).

Timeline to Success

As far as the timeline for a school turnaround is concerned, scholars and experts believe that it is achieved within two to four years of implementation. In the first two years, environment of the school is improved and the culture of the school is enhanced, and in the third and fourth years, student performance is raised.

However, this timeline usually varies and gets longer when it comes to implementing turnaround in high schools (Glickman, 2002). For successful implementation of the methods of school turnaround, practitioners have

recommended superintendents and other leadership to remain patient, since some of the performance indicators decrease when major changes are endorsed in a school (Glickman, 2002).

Many experts claim that on a quantitative scale, a school deteriorates before improvement. When the discipline of a school is altered and the school environment is changing, there are huge spikes in the rates of suspension (Cottrell & Harvey, 2004). These rates may reflect a negative state of affairs, but in actuality, the efforts of school turnaround are showing in this case. Sometimes the signs of progress of a school after turnaround are counterintuitive. In the beginning phases, the attendance and participation levels are not as high and decline, but, over time, they improve while test scores also improve gradually. The increased expectation helps in increasing attendance, competition among classes, and participation in class activities (Moore et al., 2012).

The role of superintendents is very important not only in defining, but also in monitoring and ensuring school growth from measurable indicators. According to experienced practitioners, a successful turnaround is profoundly sensed upon entering the school. Visible changes such as academic and behavioral in students are evident in the turnaround schools (Hess, 2013). These changes are in the performance levels of the students as compared to the previous data. Positive interaction and effective communication, full engagement in classroom activities, expression of optimism and pride in conversations, and depiction of much enhanced personality are among the

major norms of a school going through the process of turnaround (Bennie & Biederman, 1997).

Practitioners have mentioned that the school environment is dependent upon the activities and strategies carried out by district superintendents. A positive culture is established and promoted if the implemented strategies are effective and are on the right pathway. The progress of the students is dependent on superintendents and school leadership. To understand the difference between school management and school leadership is important in this regard. Thus, defining the success of school is the first important step towards the successful implementation of school turnaround and for ensuring positive changes in the school's environment and student performance (Hess, 2013).

Defining Success for School Systems

Tracking the success and progress of a school at the system level is very important and is carried out by superintendents through the establishment of specific objectives (Vander, 2011). Concise and detailed goals and collective measures of progress for both students and schools are critical. The process of goal setting should be aligned with milestones and timelines across the district (Vander, 2011). Further, the results must be compared across schools and districts outputs. The experienced practitioners and expert scholars have agreed collectively that turning around the schools is the core responsibility of all the districts.

Tracking the Performance of All Schools

While turnaround should be present in every district, it does not mean that the schools in which turnaround efforts are not carried out should not be considered a part of process. Moreover, it is also important for every district to monitor the involvement in turnaround schools (e.g., replacement of teachers and student dropouts, do not unfavorably leave effects on other schools) in the particular system. Turnaround schools are managed within the framework of largely regional performance, and districts need to track performance across and between all schools (Vander, 2011).

The best outcomes of turnaround efforts are achieved when districts and states develop the habit to assess and monitor their abilities for laying the foundation of successful turnaround. Assessment requires effective governance, sound leadership, and credible financial and human resources (Middleton & Petitt, 2007). These elements collectively ensure that the schools in which turnaround models are implemented are going to achieve sustainable improvements. Fixing one school at a time will never fix the situation in any district. Collective efforts are needed in this regard. The fixes are rather made at the system level, so that success can be ensured at the school level. These fixes include both low performing and high performing schools located in the identified district (Muhammad & Dufour, 2009).

Finding and Sharing Best Practices

Many educators believe that superintendents do not know about the momentum of school turnaround on the larger scale. Compounding this challenge,

the activities underlining turnaround need modern attitudes and capabilities. These two challenges have powered a tough imperative for selecting and contributing effectual practices, as well as evaluating results of diverse interventions. This sharing will help in recognizing what is functioning and is not. This sharing must occur at the state level, and across geographic boundaries (Wagner, 2010).

Turnaround Key Players

A number of key players are working in the field of school turnarounds; however, there are very less proven organizations that meet the actual demands in this regard. The existing actors also do not have the required capacity to implement the models of school turnarounds successfully at a scale. Despite providing funding to the education sector and making adequate required changes in the policy, the federal government has decided to intervene in the field of school turnaround. This assists in screening the quality of schools and superintendents who possess less experience in this regard (Muhammad & Dufour, 2009). Along with the federal government, other major actors in school turnaround are districts, unions, school operators, supporting partners, research and field building organizations, and philanthropic funders (Wagner, 2010).

States and Districts

Leaders of schools are extremely valued as they play a vital role in school turnarounds. The momentum has grown by increasing the funding processes under federal government efforts, and efforts in cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C. have enhanced school performance in turnaround

processes. The states of Colorado, Delaware, Louisiana, and Texas are also experiencing changes because of increased momentum of school turnaround activities. In addition to this, efforts are being launched by many other states and districts, and the mobilization of response to federal priorities and funding is increasing in order to boost up the efforts of school turnaround activities (McManus, 2006). Strategies for successful turnarounds are being developed and implemented by states, along with creations of new policies. Additionally, new methods are being accessed by states and school districts to build partnerships for increasing the capacity levels (Fullan, 2003).

Interventions for school turnaround are being directly implemented by districts in which financial issues are being addressed comprehensively and support for school operators is being developed effectively. In addition to this, different stakeholders are also approached for partnerships in establishment and implementation of wide human capital solutions. Effective actions, which are taken by states and districts in this regard, are further helpful on district level turnaround (Fullan, 2003).

Building the Capacity to Do Turnaround Work

It is widely agreed by both state and district leaders that the development of a human capital assists schools in achieving the success of school turnarounds. The use of human capital (the talent of individuals); social capital (the collaborative power of the group); and decisional capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound

judgments about learners that are cultivated over many years) are all crucial to turnarounds. (Fullan, 2013).

For the development of that ability pipeline, synchronized effort at both the state and district level is essential. A consistent and unified leadership system, in line with well-coordinated policies and systems across states and districts, emerges to be a capable strategy for establishing school leaders. These leaders can be identified as individuals who are engaged in recuperating instruction. The development of talent also needs training for meeting the challenges of school turnaround (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Additionally, universities and non-profit firms have been set-up for training the huge quantity of teachers and support staff, which is a must for success in persistently low achieving (PLA) schools. Consequently, specific districts and states have established integration between professional development programs with strategies of turnaround. However, others have developed partnerships with outdoor human capital providers (Johnson, 1996). Along with the need to make human capital strong in the schools, states and districts have also established their capabilities to sustain the efforts of turnaround, and to work in direct interaction with schools. The department builds partnerships with every region to observe and supervise functioning of the plan (Johnson, 1996).

For assistance, administrative trainers (in Kentucky, named Educational Recovery Leaders and Specialists) have been brought in by the state for working collaboratively with the districts, for building a learning framework for turnaround

principals, and to talk about problems and best exercises all over districts. Working with the schools requires more effort and making districts partners helps in successful school turnaround.

For example in New Haven in 2009, a new contract was approved for the schools which have the lowest performance in the district. The agreement compelled the schools to recognize that turnarounds be set-up with the help of new leadership and changed management. Teachers re-applied for their positions, and it was the principals' decision whether to hire them or not. Those schools were also unrestricted from most of the strict regulations and a third party managed most of them. This contract has been under the heavy criticism, with critics arguing that it is incapable of handling occupancy and pay-for-performance related issues (Blanchard, 2010). However, according to many scholars and practitioners, this was a breakthrough for initiating discussion between management and unions. This contract, as per the views of many, addresses the voice of the teachers and provides the schools with the flexibility to make the adequate reforms for themselves.

Other major issues linked with high-end needs of schools are also now beginning to be examined by unions (Moore et al., 2012). The initiation of dialogue between the school and district management and unions has helped in initiating a new era of school turnaround. The discussion between these two parties has started to bring positive points out of the box and thus, if promoted, will develop more sustainable and collaborative frameworks for successful school turnarounds (Cottrell & Harvey, 2004).

The central office is thus full of competent people who can serve in the right direction. Superintendents with the leaders of the central office establish new roles and relations. This development of communicative relations helps in establishing an alignment between the core businesses of schools that are going through the process of turnaround. The themes for all the superintendents are similar regardless of the type of turnaround that being implemented. An important element here is the size of the district since the levels of partnerships and the assigning of roles are based upon the size of the district. A large district will definitely need more roles and relationships as compared to a smaller district (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012). The participation of all the roles and relations with the district leaders and superintendents help in developing a competitive environment where the aim of everyone is to serve the school turnaround process for giving it a sustainable success (Bennis & Biederman, 1997).

Leading the Change

The role of superintendents in operating with the leaders at the district level is a significant shift in terms of capacity building. However, experienced practitioners have voiced that bringing this valuable shift is quite tough in most of the cases. The reason behind this is that the district level leaders must stay in the loop, and when the roles are shifted according to the situation, the principals are given the charge and this causes problems (Bennis & Biederman, 1997). Alterations in the relationships between school principals and superintendents cause a shift in the roles impacting the relationships of superintendents with the district level leaders, which means that

providing district, level leaders the recognition is very important, for which the superintendents must work intentionally with them. This recognition can result in changes in the involvement levels of the district leaders who can hesitate to work on behalf of the superintendent if the superintendents do not address the issues adequately (Glickman, 2002).

Thus, rewarding the district level leaders can prove to be a helpful strategy. For making district level leaders a valuable part of the whole system, it is important that the communication of school superintendents with the district level leaders is effective and active. The changes in the roles must be clear and purposeful. Similar is the case with the relationships and partnerships of superintendents with principals and district level leaders. If a change occurs in the leadership, everyone is affected either positively or negatively, depending upon the nature of change. If the district level leaders, by any means, perceive that the roles and activities of them are shrinking and are becoming limited, this can result in a situation of frustration and animosity (Leithwood, 2012). Thus, a superintendent must be the chief developer of not only the principals, but also of the district level leaders. District level leaders must be provided with the opportunities to have active engagement in the conversations, in an environment where they feel safe to convey their concerns and issues, upon changes in roles. The superintendents should do this regularly so that no role is ignored at all. The support of superintendents is necessary for the district level leaders for leading the whole change process (Duke et al., 2012).

Leading the change process can be tough if any conflict arises between school superintendents and district level leaders. Conflicts can rise due to many reasons, including the lack of support of superintendent, lack of motivation for the district level leaders to work in their new roles, weak relationships between the leadership layers, and lack of understanding between the superintendents and district level leaders. For overcoming these issues, the communication barrier must be broken at first, so that both the parties can freely convey their concerns to each other (Herman, Dawson, Dee, Green, Maynard, & Redding, 2008). Moreover, development of a friendly environment is also very crucial since it brings trust between all stakeholders. Thus, the effective strategies of school superintendents can result in affective change through the whole state (Kentucky revised statutes).

Impacts of Superintendent's Role on the Role of District Level Leaders.

The impact of a superintendent's role is quite acute and significant on the role of district level leaders. This impact is because of the influence of superintendents to build the capacity of leaders. The network of superintendents and the collaboration between the members of that network is influenced by the strategic plans that are made by the district to bring around significant changes in the schools. The superintendents should engage all the district level leaders in the meaningful dialogue. These include directors from finance and business fields. The reason behind this engagement is to lead the change across the whole district (Jehlen, 2012). The leadership roles are distributed and the sense of awareness is developed. This helps in more inputs that are useful with the help of which the process of school

turnaround is directed to the most appropriate path. Under the focused leadership of the superintendent ineffective leadership and administrator growth opportunities evolved significantly, to ensure more opportunities can be created for the growth of the schools (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012).

In effective turnaround efforts, central office leaders get involved in providing their services to the schools going through turnaround processes. Thus, the organizational structure flattened and the resources are re-aligned for supporting the school operations in a more effective way. The problems prevailed by the schools are reframed in new and much more creative ways; thus the creation of solo mentality is eliminated by this attribute. Superintendents call together the right individuals for dealing with the issues more productively. The titles of the people are not given much importance. The superintendents take the district leaders to the school, thereby improving the conditions much more effectively. Superintendents align all the resources - physical, financial, and human - for better use, and the resources are brought in line with the reformed beliefs and vision of the school as an organization. Superintendents carefully select the individuals who will serve as leaders of districts (Calkins et al., 2007).

Implications and Their Resolution for the Future

There are numerous stark and mild implications in the process of school turnaround when a superintendent brings the transformation in the central office, especially when the focus is on capacity building. Capacity builders are those people who run the whole process with putting systems into their required places. The

beliefs and vision of a school must be fulfilled, and the decisions, which are taken for ensuring this by the superintendents, at times can be harsh. This process can cause several implications (Danielson, 2007). If the district level leaders are not customer focused, the school turnaround process will not succeed. For coping and resolving the implications, the engagement of the district level leaders in the central office and in the school change process must be active. For ensuring this, the superintendents must have active communication with district level leaders and must support them by awarding them. If recognition is not provided to the district level leaders, they will never feel happy working when their roles are shifted and their activities are conserved (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

The integration of the reformed beliefs with the beliefs of the central leadership is very important. Integration causes a smooth flow of plan throughout the school turnaround process. The business interests must be in line with each other. The changes should be communicated to each other and throughout the district. Understanding levels must be raised so that communication issues can never occur (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Culture

In order to develop a healthy culture, it is important to bring, enhance, and develop a school environment that can produce more productive results for students and consequently for teachers and whole district (Rosborg , McGee, & Burgett, 2003). Many factors are associated in this regard. The main factors to be identified include data collection, culture, and building capacity within staff. The environment

and the culture of the school are known to be driver of any school's foundation when it comes to the performance of the students. The environment of a school generates the conditions of learning for students, whether they are favorable or unfavorable.

Moreover, the capacities that are being identified and implemented for the development of the teachers are known to affect directly school culture. Individual growth needs based on the data of the school as well as growth needs identified by the teachers and administration are being used to drive professional development planning. When the culture of the school starts to develop under the efforts of a school turnaround, it deteriorates first and then escalates on the chart. This phenomenon is because, in the initial stages, the culture is affected and starts to re-develop. With changes and the positive attitudes of the students, the performance of the students can also be improved. The participation levels of the students are increased significantly due to favorable environment development and the students who previously are not regular attendees start to come to school regularly for beating their peers in academic scores. In order to increase the collaboration among the teachers and students, successful changes in the school culture is important.

Moreover, the data gathered analysis is very important for forecasting. This will successfully implement the policies, strategies, and the vision of the whole district. It is a widely agreed fact that if data is not gathered and assessed in time, then the school turnaround efforts cannot be tracked, and in this case, the efforts will result in a failure, going in vain. In order to collect the data for assessment of the student, it is important for the teachers to constantly monitor student progress through

formative and summative assessment as well as parent input. Therefore, for the process of successful turnaround, it is important for having the maximum levels of collaboration, increasing the efficiency data assessment overall.

In summary, it is the responsibility of a school superintendent to carry out all the effective strategies to accomplish this process efficiently. The plan is made and the feedback taken under the supervision of superintendents. The data assessed either by a committee answerable to school superintendent or by the superintendent himself/herself. Moreover, it has been asserted in the literature and data collected that there should be assessment and accountability of the school superintendents across the district. The process of accountability and the steps that carried out must be cohesive all over the lowest performing schools of the district. The decision-making right is also of the school superintendent, who, dependent on inappropriate or negligible progress, changes the flow of whole process and implements more aggressive strategies, with redefined vision, so that significant progress of the school can be enhanced.

Role of school superintendent in changing the culture of schools. The culture of a school is made of the different elements that are present in the environment of the school. These elements comprise the surroundings in which students spend their academic life. It is a widely agreed upon in the Educational Community consisting of educators and administrators that the culture of the school has significant impact on the learning capacities of its students (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). The attitudes of teachers are also dependent on the

school culture. If the culture or environment of a school is negative, this will have an adverse effect, which may decrease student performance. In developing an effective and a healthy school culture, the role of the superintendent is significant and directs the total process (Rosborg, McGee, & Burgett, 2003).

What is a healthy school culture? A healthy school culture can be defined as a school environment that brings the best results for the students (Rosborg et al., 2003). The factors associated with this argument are many. To start, understanding the key attributes is very important. Key features of a healthy school culture include a strong collaborative environment, healthy communication between students and teachers, linearity in the procedures being carried out, no influence of external forces by any means, and an environment where students feel free to adapt their own learning methods. For a successful school turnaround, shaping the culture in a school is the first step to take. A healthy school culture keeps all the negative factors out of the environment. The role of the superintendent is significant when it comes to developing a healthy school culture. The communication between all the schools in a district is also dependent on school and district cultures. The students represent their school and consequently the culture of the school in which they study (Hoyle, 2007).

Role of school environment. The environment of a school generates the conditions of learning for students, whether they are favorable or unfavorable. A healthy school culture results in the generation of more opportunities for its students and provides the students with more chances to progress and enhance in their learning. On the other hand, an unhealthy school culture results in a significant

decrease in the opportunities for students to learn and progress (Danielson, 2007). The development of a positive school culture is very important as it may drive the direction of all the school turnaround efforts. When turnaround methods are implemented within a school, the environment of a school is the first thing that starts to change its shape (Fullan, 2003). This change is because in underperforming schools the culture is responsible for the deficit of the students. Moreover, teaching capacities are also badly affected if the school culture is not coordinated for improvements. When the culture of the school begins to develop under the efforts of a school turnaround, it deteriorates first and then starts showing signs of improvements. The superintendent ensures that the school culture is directed in a precise way and that it encompasses all the positivity that is required to bring success for turnaround efforts (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Importance of school culture. When it comes to the efforts of school turnaround, the importance of the school culture cannot be neglected. If the school culture has no room for improvement, then comparatively more aggressive turnaround targets will be set so that the change can be forced, not expected to come. Proportionally, if the school culture has not gone out of the reach of betterment, then targets and aims of school turnaround are set accordingly as moderate and mild ones (Sa & Thompson, 2005). During the process of school turnaround, the environment of the school and the student performance levels are the core factors targeted to experience a significant change (Fullan, 2003). Thus, the environment of the school is significant in bringing the required change in all the domains of operations.

How do superintendents effectively change the school culture? Already established is the direct link between school turnaround and school culture. It is therefore important that we be able to appropriately measure change in school culture. School superintendents' role in this context can be highlighted by claiming that cooperation with all the branches of the school and systems and by taking the leadership in confidence. Superintendents can make decisions that direct toward changed school cultures. Involvement of any external factors is cut out. First identification is confirmed, and then assessment of the problem is carried out. This step is followed by the implementation of effective techniques that remove the root causes of the problems. Moreover, the changes in the culture are made by imposing some elements on the students. The changing environment is measured by the superintendents with the help of feedback from both students and teachers (Miller-Williams, & Kristonis, 2010).

Benefits of positive changes in culture. Upon successful changes in the school culture and environment, the process of successful school turnaround can be achieved. Positive changes in the environment of the school increase the competition among the students and among the teachers. The participation levels of the students are increased significantly due to favorable cultural development. It has been observed that the students, who previously are not regular attendees, have improved their attendance to school regularly, which leads to increasing their academic achievement. The same is the case with teachers (Miller-Williams & Kristonis, 2010). Collaboration levels are increased, and the learning capacities of both teachers

and students are enhanced by successful changes in school culture. The measure of school environment change is then followed by measurement of the change in the student performance. A more favorable school environment results in enhanced student performance levels due to increase in participation levels (Miller-Williams & Kristonis, 2010). The nature of the school activities change drastically and create more opportunities for students to progress. The test scores improve and the school performance overall enhances comprehensively (Kowal et al., 2009).

Sustainability Factors

Positive changes in environment and culture of the school or are not the only mechanism that superintendents should consider in turning around a school.

Sustaining these positive changes over time is of priority. For a sustained and well-maintained school environment and culture, superintendents implement clear agendas for ensuring that the work directed to school cultures does not lose its ability.

Sustainability in the environment and culture of a school can be achieved with the help of many effective strategies. These strategies include constant feedback, monitoring, and regular assessment of the sources that previously generated issues (Herman et al., 2008). Superintendents must consistently and frequently monitor progress since the process of school turnaround lasts for about four years; the strategies should be durable enough to last that long. Flexibility of the methods is also very important since flexibility enables the school environment to mold its shape according to the needs of the students. An environment in which the student/ teacher communication is developed effectively finds its own issues and resolves them. The

sustainability of the positive school culture and environment is very important for the sustainability of the efforts of school turnaround (Duffy, 2006).

Sustainability is a factor that can be rendered by the Superintendent's role in turnaround. Efficient and effective management and practices can increase successful transitions before, during and after the turnaround process to ensure positive growth in a school. They set specific achievement targets for schools and students and monitor those targets, ensuring consistent use of research-based best instructional practices in all schools and classrooms. (Kentucky Association of School Administrators, 2013).

What Outcomes Are Achieved?

The integration of student and teacher goals is the first significant outcome of the successful turnaround of school culture (Duffy, 2006). Further, there are the increased progress rates. Engagement level of the students is increased, and this brings a very competitive environment where the focus is on increasing individual academic scores. From the teachers' perspective, teaching capacity increases significantly as the focus is just on delivering the learning material to the students (Herman et al., 2008). The quality of education increases collectively, and this results in an increased understanding of the student with respect to the demands. The school superintendents play a vital role in turning around the school culture in favor of the school's objectives. Carrying on the momentum of this change in the school environment to the changes in the student performances is very crucial. Tracking and measuring the changes help in developing adequate frameworks for ensuring that the

changes in the school culture are maintained (Comprehensive school reform program, 2004).

Role of School Superintendent in School Turnaround via Data Analysis

Data analysis in the context of school turnaround means the assessment of data in the development of schools. The progress is in terms of both the school culture and student performance. The data are collected through many sources and there are many strategies to check the credibility of the gathered data (Comprehensive school reform program, 2004). The school superintendents make this process possible by creating and monitoring methods of feedback related to the changes that the school has gone through after the implementation of school turnaround methods. The efforts of school turnaround cannot be turned into successful ones if the data are not assessed and analyzed correctly or if timely analyses are not carried out (No child left behind, 2004).

What Forms Of Data Are Important To Collect?

The data assessed under the supervision of school superintendent is primarily of two types: one related to the progress of the environment of the school, and the second related to the progress of the student performance (Duffy, 2006). The teachers progress is also collected in terms of formative, classroom and state assessments and this comes under the data of environment. Along with this, the changes that are required in the school are assessed. Further, the changes implemented in the future are anticipated and are compiled under the supervision of the school superintendent. This method of collection helps in collectively assessing

the data of the past and forecasting changes in the future (Comprehensive school reform program, 2004). Constant monitoring through data gathering and analysis is very important for projecting the future progress of the school. If data are not gathered and analyzed in a timely systemic manner, then the school turnaround efforts cannot be tracked. In such circumstances, all the efforts will result in a failure (McGuinn, 2013).

Superintendents adopt different methods for gathering data related to school environment, culture, and student performance. Scores of the student assessments are gathered and analyzed for tracking the degree of improvement. Feedback forms are created and are divided among the members of a population (e.g. Students, in case of student performance assessment). Data are analyzed and examined carefully (Jehlen, 2012). In the beginning of a school turnaround, student performance, like school culture, experiences a downfall, and then it rises up significantly. There are other methods of generating and gathering data, including annual reports, students' focus groups, surveys, observations of parents, and views of school staff. Data related to the progress of school culture are usually gathered with the help of interviews from students and teachers, in which the increase in the efficiency of the environment is measured. The data related to the student performance are gathered via demographics, tests, feedback from parents, etc. The methods should be clear, and the involvement of stakeholders of the school being turned around is very important for having maximum collaboration (Schaffer et al., 2012). In this way, efficiency of the data analysis process increases.

The Superintendents are responsible for gathering the data and then evaluating it using a variety of techniques. Data related to the changes in school are examined for fractures existing in the school system. The quality of the education and the change for improvement are assessed. The previous data are compared with the new data, which are collected after the implementation of school turnaround efforts and any gap is, highlighted (Herman, 2012). In case of no gaps or minimal gaps, the vision of the efforts of school turnaround is re- defined with aim of implementing more aggressive strategies and alternative methods of turnaround.

For data analysis, planning an effective strategy is very important. The reason behind the requirement of effective planning is that the school turnaround process, on average, takes four years. In the first two years, the culture of the school tends to change and in the next two years the student performance progresses consequently. Thus, the data gathering process should be regular and well organized throughout the process of school turnaround. Many scholars believe that annual data are enough to be assessed for tracking the progress of a turning around school (Hoekstra, 2010). However, data is gathered on a regular basis through the implementation of effective information systems.

Regular data collection helps in timely analysis of data and helps in tracking the gradual changes that the school experiences (Jehlen, 2012). The steady analysis is helpful in maintaining a detailed log of what is developed and sustained in the process. Within the Lee County School District one example of monitoring was the process of 30 -60- 90 day planning was implemented district wide. 30- 60 -90 day

planning involves short term and long term planning and monitoring of specific goals and objectives and who is responsible for the implementation. Another method, is using individual student assessment tracking forms. These forms are contained in a notebook and monitored by students, staff and parents. The superintendent, central office staff, principals and teachers participates in the entire process of 30- 60- 90. The long duration of an average school turnaround process is a complex factor; if not assessed properly, it can result in a failure. In improving low performing schools in a district to higher performing schools, it is important that all the weaknesses be identified and then assessed for the implementation plan. Thus, a systemic process should be there for ensuring all the changes, from lowest to most prominent ones, are tracked timely. Similarly, the school superintendent (Leithwood, 2012) decides future approaches accordingly.

Importance of Data Analysis for Successful Turnarounds

The importance of regular and timely data analysis in order to bring success to the school turnaround is evident in the existing literature on this topic. Cohesive data analysis enables the leadership and superintendents to take action appropriately and adequately. A forecast report regarding the future changes helps more in this context. The forecast report helps in predicting the extent of efforts required in the next phase of school turnaround (Jehlen, 2012). The data related to student performance are more significant than school culture, because the performance of students of a school is the indicator of that school in the district or in the state. Integration between all the steps of school turnaround is very important. Data analysis makes this integration

possible by decisions that are taken after timely analysis of data by superintendents (Leithwood, 2012).

Superintendents' Efforts

It is the responsibility of a school superintendent to carry out all the effective strategies of data analysis competently and accurately. The Superintendent in the Lee County School District, leads the district in Data Analysis Day with clear expectations and the use of these five guiding questions.

1. What does the data tell us?
2. What does the data not tell us?
3. What are our causes to celebrate?
4. What are our needs for improvement based on the data?
5. What are the next steps?

The Superintendent requires all schools as well as the district to develop an action plan based on the findings of data analysis. The strategy is organized and taken under the supervision of school superintendents (Leithwood, 2012). A committee of teachers and staff, who are all accountable to the superintendent, analyzes the data. The superintendent should also analyze and know the data himself/herself. The accountability of the school superintendent across the district is significant since the steps carried out must be interconnected all over the lowest performing schools of the district (Clifford, 2013). Superintendents who identified inappropriate or insignificant progress must change the flow of the whole process and

implement more aggressive strategies, with a redefined vision, so that significant progress of the school can be ensured (Duke, 2012).

The Superintendent of the Lee County District, after reviewing all action plans and data analysis, reports the information to the Board of Education, community, as well as open forum meetings.

The effort should not only focus on student performance, but also on the progress of the school in enhancing the school culture in favor of students.

Throughout the duration of the school turnaround, the data analysis is ongoing. Investment in technology is very beneficial, since it generates better results and helps in making smooth flow of the processes. Some technology the researcher used as Superintendent in the Lee County School District were iPads, Apple Mac Labs, Mondo Pads, Distance Learning, Mobile Labs, and Dell tablets for staff. The combined uses of these technologies ensured a greater wealth of resources and communication methods for staff and students alike. Managing data through this variety of technology, allowed for more focused and accurate management of instruction as well as data collection and analysis. The plan should be distinct for different schools in the district, depending upon the level of progress needed. In the event of the lowest performing schools, aggressive plans will be made by the school superintendent, and in case of an average performing school, a lenient approach will be opted (Hess, 2013).

Role of School Superintendent in Building Capacity within Staff

A school turnaround can be called successful if the staff improves in capacity and leadership. An increase in the capacity of school staff will ultimately engage students further in their learning, which will increase and enhance the learning capacity of the students (Duke, 2012). It is agreed upon by experienced practitioners that the learning aptitude of students and teaching ability of teachers can be increased with successful implementation of instructional plans. If teachers fail to build the capacity levels within themselves, then students remain at the same levels of learning and no development is expected. (Muhammad & DuFour, 2009). The progress of any school is directly linked with the progress of its teachers. The evolution of the ways of teaching has changed globally, and now ways that are more effective are taught.

Re-Defining Beliefs and Vision

Redefining the vision and beliefs of the low performing school is a crucial aspect in school improvement. The superintendent acts in a cohesive manner for redefining the vision of the school. This vision must be clear and communicated to all the stakeholders in the community. Displaying the vision is very important since it enables the underlining of the efforts that are vital be carried out. For successful turnaround, the actions of the district must be in-line with the newly defined beliefs and values (McManus, 2006). Moreover, the actions are monitored through the vision, accomplished through increased collaboration district-wide. Increasing and facilitating the communication between superintendents, teachers, and students is fundamental, resulting in a smooth development. Changing the vision of a school

changes the whole process flow, as the newly defined vision requires new approaches (Muhammad & DuFour, 2009).

Engaging in the Work

After redefining the vision and mission of the school, the superintendent engages all school staff for creating the outlined approaches for meeting the new goals. In doing this, the researcher and Superintendent of Lee County School District, took full responsibility of instructional and administrative practices within the district, recently leading the district through strategic planning and the development of new vision, mission, and goals. Input was gathered from all stakeholders through three open forums. Committees were organized around identified strengths and weaknesses. Communication and engagement at district level are carried out, and it is the core responsibility of a school superintendent to bring the stakeholders closer. Engagement with stakeholders helps in a process under which the vision is refined. The core business of schools must be an acute focus for the school superintendent, and community and social capital is built by implementing the strategic plan (Moore et al., 2012). Superintendents act as filters for changing the whole system, thereby increasing the capacity of the school staff.

Superintendents then monitor the work and strengthen the main business of the districts. The involvement and engagement of superintendents of schools must focus on the whole system, rather than only the school needing turnaround. All the stakeholders need focus to ensure that turnaround methods can be implemented with the satisfaction of all (Hoekstra, 2010).

Communication Levels Between the Staff

The communication level among the school staff of different systems is the next important step, as this ensures that the newly defined vision will be met adequately. If there is little or no collaboration and communication between the staff, then the quality of education will be effected, which will then affect student performance. For ensuring the cohesiveness of the approaches, the development of effective communication between school staff and teachers is very crucial. Moreover, communication between teachers and students is also very important since this integrates the goals of both the teachers and students with the goals of the school and district (Calkins et al., 2007). The lines of communication must be kept open by the superintendents so that they are readily available to all. The vision and beliefs must also be communicated to the community so that community and social capital can be built.

Communication brings areas of mutual interest, which happens in line with the interests of the entire staff. Thus, the operations are carried out in a more cohesive manner, which can easily be assessed and examined at times. Willingness to listen must be practiced by all so that the staff has the right to speak with openness. This will also help in increasing the motivation levels of the school staff (Muijs & Chapman, 2013).

Alignment of Roles, Rules, and Relationships with Beliefs and Vision

Development of relationships that promote innovativeness and trust in the school environment is very important for successful school turnarounds. The

superintendent communicates the visions in a clear way to all the stakeholders and expectations of implementation of the vision are raised. In order to attain this, creating a positive state of mind is very important. Since the process of school turnaround is of long duration on average, the superintendent can make wrong decisions. The district level leaders for developing long lasting and trust worthy relationships (Kowal et al., 2009) must carry out positive reinforcements. For contribution to the entire turnaround process and continuous improvement, superintendents along with the stakeholders collaboratively participate with the community. Gradual steps are needed for ensuring success.

Superintendents also serve in other capacities across local and state communities, which ensure the vision and mission and beliefs are widely communicated to all stakeholders. Stakeholders are used in meaningful ways, and maximum potential is extracted out of the partnerships in order to improve the school turnaround process. The availability of the superintendent to all stakeholders is very important since it ensures that issues are well addressed and the remedies are found in a timely manner (Sa & Thompson, 2005).

Reyes (2007) defines academic achievement or school effectiveness as the degree of achievement of the objectives set out in the syllabus. Education is a deliberate action, and in terms of quality of education, all education tries to improve students' academic performance. School performance is an indicator of the level of learning achieved by the student; therefore, the educational system gives much importance to that indicator (Hess, 2013). However, the performance of students

involves many other external variables like the quality of teaching, performance, family, school, etc. It is also related to many psychological or internal variables, such as attitude toward subject, intelligence, personality, activities carried out by the student, and motivation (Johnson, 1996).

Importance of Staff Replacement in School Turnaround

Replacement of school staff, including teachers and principals, is among the foremost jobs of a school superintendent. Replacement normally occurs when a process of school turnaround begins. In some cases, underperforming teachers are replaced with new or more experienced teachers who have higher levels of teaching abilities. In the Lee County School District, the principal was removed from their positions while no teachers were removed at the beginning of the process. The Site Based Decision Making Council also lost authority, placing the superintendent in the role of complete decision maker until council authority could be returned.

Throughout the process the superintendent organized and led the advisory council meetings. The reason for this was to work to fully restore a functioning council following the turnaround process. The toxic employees are a huge threat for the progress of any school system. The school environment affects the teaching capacities of the staff and for building capacity levels of staff; it is the superintendent's duty to replace the staff, especially teachers and principals, in short, leading to a strong positive change (Sa & Thompson, 2005).

The teachers are sometimes rehired and get the opportunity to prove their value again. The replacement of school staff during the process of school turnaround

substitutes the negative points with positive ones. It is very important to inform the changed teachers the reason behind their replacements; replacements are also considered from department to department.

Training of the School Staff

Training teachers in a school, which is undergoing the process of school turnaround, is very important in terms of building the capacity levels. The training needs analysis is the core step that is taken by the school superintendents. The Lee County School Superintendent who is also the researcher, facilitated the Perpetuating Excellence in Teaching, Leadership and Learning (PETLL) for two years, the Professional Growth and Evaluation System for teachers and principals, as well as the Next Generation Superintendents Evaluation. The PETLL initiative is used to address the two areas that have the greatest impact on student learning; the classroom teacher and the building instructional leader. It is used to facilitate and establish a level of culture of growth with excellence in instruction. (PETLL.com, 2011) The Lee County District also used the Professional Development 360 which is used for individual growth for staff. All of these initiatives are used districtwide. The training sessions incorporate professional and individual development programs that enhance the absorbing skills of the teachers and thus provide them with the knowledge to build their teaching skills. The capacity levels of teachers are changed positively through professional development (Johnson, 1996). The training should be regular and must be carried out on all levels of the teaching staff. The more talented teachers should be

encouraged to set examples and be mentors to the younger and relatively lesser-experienced teachers.

The consistency of the training material is important in this context, as this helps in ensuring that the training is bringing positive results in a significant direction. For assessing the need of training, feedback forms are gathered from all the teachers, and the school superintendent plans the training with a clear focus on effective best practices. Development of a comfortable environment with effective communication levels is very important so that the training development can be successful for the school turnaround (Moore et al., 2012).

Developing Effective Leaders

The development of leadership skills among school administrators and teachers is very important in bringing success to all efforts of school turnaround. The extent of creativity is in the nature of leaders and helps in developing effective and innovative frameworks for bringing drastic changes to the school. The environment of school is changed when the new models are implemented. It can help students in increasing the learning capacities. Similar is the case when it comes to the teaching capacities of the teachers (Zavadsky, 2012).

An effective superintendent facilitates development of a strong bond between the teachers and the students, increasing the participation of both the students and school staff with each other and with academic activities. As Superintendent of the district in the study, the researcher encouraged cohesiveness and accountability on everyone's behalf during the turnaround process. Forming leadership committees, as

well as, communication and TELL committees with both staff and students to ensure everyone had a voice in the direction the school was taking. The Superintendent of the Lee County District also partnered with Asbury University to form the Lee County Emerging Leaders Network which was open to anyone in the district who had interest in growing as an educator. During this partnership, the group studied staff dispositions, formative assessment and leadership strategies. The major challenges that superintendents face include the lack of patience, excessively slow process of turnaround, lack of support from the board of education, and lack of support from the community. Thus, the role of superintendents is very important when it comes to the development of effective leaders within schools. The superintendents themselves act like effective leaders if the strategic decisions made by them are in comprehensive alignment with the newly reformed beliefs and vision of the schools (Hoekstra, 2010).

Assessing Teacher Performance

After all the strategies and plans are implemented for building the capacity of the school staff, measuring the change is very important. Many tools are necessary for the district superintendent to measure change over time in response to turnaround efforts (Clifford, 2013). The superintendents evaluate the skills of educators (defined as internal characteristics of individuals, involving the interaction between knowledge, skills, and dispositions). The competencies are related to job performance of people, since they determine their ability to meet different situations with creativity and flexibility. This process is evaluated with functionality and behavioral

competencies of teachers and school administrators. School performance is treated as a measure of respondents or indicative capacities (Schaffer et al., 2012).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The third chapter in the study is about the procedure performed in order to structure and process the capstone project. The chapter also identifies the justification for using the identified method of research, which also drove and directed the whole research project and carried out the analysis of primary and the secondary data. The strategy and the approach are two core elements of this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), and therefore addressed comprehensively in this chapter. The main idea of this research is to understand the role of the school superintendents in school turnaround. The study has assessed the changing role of the school superintendent in the turnaround process and how this was implemented in district turnarounds. It is very important for a researcher to understand the basic assumptions of a study in order to justify the design of the research (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Therefore, the researcher identified the research assumptions and provided justifications for the method of the study.

Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2009) defined any industry's focus group as a group having a specific listening purpose and that helps in gathering the relevant information. According to Saunders et al. (2009), the focused groups are very important in terms of understanding the perception of the people regarding a particular subject. It is important for attaining the viewpoints on a selected and studied area of interest. For this particular study, the respondents are selected depending on common

characteristics; all members of the focus group were practicing superintendents. Therefore, the focus group was regarded an appropriate population to provide feedback for this study.

The reason behind selecting the strategy of focus groups for data collection is to incorporate the data obtained from participants in all sorts of research steps, so that the core theme of the research is conceptualized more clearly and the data can be triangulated. The information collected from the participants will then be decoded and analyzed in order to extract the core findings. A key goal of the focus group process is to ensure that there is lesser bias in the interview questions and the responses of the interviewees (Myers, 2013).

The case study approach in the context of this research helped the researcher to understand the primary theme from a much closer perceptive. Moreover, with the use of case study approach, the researcher also organized the study by finding themes or similar characteristics identified in other research projects (Miller, Mauthner, Birch, & Jessop, 2012). The case study method is dependent on successful example from the past (Seidman, 2012). The advantage of using case study method is cost efficiency. Time constraints are another reason behind the adoption of case study method for this research (Erickson, 2012). Therefore, in order to facilitate this research, the case study approach was adopted as a core strategy.

The subject of the case study is Lee County School System in Beattyville, Kentucky. Its purpose is to analyze the effective role of the superintendent in a turnaround district. The researcher gathered data from a variety of sources including

in-district surveys and assessment results. Additionally, external data were collected that included surveys, state-mandated assessment results, and a focus group of in-service superintendents. This external data helped in collecting information regarding turnaround by analyzing and implementing the successful role of school superintendents.

All Kentucky superintendents were surveyed by the researcher to develop a broad understanding implementation of the strategies for the effective role of school superintendents in district turnaround.

Research Design

This research followed a staged process, of which the most prominent components are:

1. Identifying and defining the research problem.
2. Choice and operational approach to the study.
3. Defining the objectives
4. Choice and operationalization of the study unit.
5. Selection, adaptation or construction of techniques and instruments.
6. Application of instruments, data collection.
7. Preparation and discussion of results and drawing conclusions.
8. Preparation of the report end and conclusion.
9. Identifying future recommendations

The chosen theoretical framework and context of the researcher served as the center point to all stages of the research design. The main idea behind conducting

qualitative research is to develop an understanding about the topic and to collect authentic information about the study. It is important that the researcher understand and develop theoretical framework for the study. It is helpful for achieving research aims and objectives.

The second stage of the study was completed through a comprehensive literature review to ensure that the current research could inform the analysis of the research questions and the data arising from the enquiry (Gallacher et al., 2013). The literature gathered from the primary resources proved quite helpful for developing a standard, after triangulating with all available data. By developing the findings of the data, the researcher successfully developed a modified pattern and flexible strategy for identifying the research objectives.

The past studies using a similar approach helped identify a method for conducting this research. The existing literature also assisted in ensuring the significant understanding of the research conducted through the study. These steps helped ensure that the strategy and research methodology that were selected for conducting this study were the optimum ones. In this capstone project, the researcher reviewed a number of research projects before choosing the research methodology.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is based on the subjective in-depth analysis of a topic, using largely non-numerical data. Using qualitative data helped the researcher gain an in-depth understanding about the turnaround process during the study. Qualitative data were gathered from interviews and existing literature.

Moreover, the qualitative data in the study were beneficial for identifying the perception of the respondents in the study and consequently helped in understanding the practical implications of the topic. Qualitative research methodology has the potential to present rich data, which are helpful in answering the research questions (Coast et al., 2012). The methods are applicable in the research when there is a need to identify why, how, and what questions, in ways that illuminate the research context with descriptive narration. Along with this, qualitative research is used in the research where there is a need to find the experience, roles, perception, and opinions of the respondents in the study. Moreover, it is useful when there is a need to develop content-based study. With the help of qualitative approach, the existing literature was compared with the perceptions gathered from the interviewees. Further, qualitative research represents subjective data to participants (Conboy, Fitzgerald, & Mathiassen, 2012).

Flexibility in the research topic and the findings of the study are two key factors while considering this research method. It allows the researcher to adjust findings according to the perceptions and experiences. According to Cheek (2005) and Freeman et al. (2007), the users of the qualitative research design have increased more than ever before in the last two decades. The researchers have also argued that the increased use of qualitative research methodology indicates that professional norms, standards of evidence, and subjective analysis are evolving in the research.

In qualitative research, interviews are sometimes used for gathering primary data and firsthand knowledge about the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). The

interviews in the qualitative research are semi-structured or open-ended, depending upon the requirements of the research topic. The qualitative research is important in the areas where there is a need to address the social phenomenon in any field of research (Wimmer, 2012). Furthermore, the literature review that was conducted during the research is also part of qualitative data, and therefore was interpreted in study through qualitative methods. Data that were from qualitative research helps in developing a theoretical framework, gathering an understanding of theories and concepts of research.

The interviews in the study provided detailed data on the role of the superintendents in district turnarounds. This gathered data helped in focusing on the research content and thereby developing the study from the perspectives of respondents.

Quantitative Research Methodology

According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical, data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods in particular statistics. The researcher used an anonymous survey to Kentucky school superintendents to gain quantitative data. Questions focused respondent perceptions on most and least important factors contributing to the superintendents' roles in school turnaround. With quantitative research, it is important to use easy to understand language while not losing statistical value (Chen, 2012).

Research Approach

For this project, the researcher chose a deductive approach. The researcher gathered information in order to answer the research questions. This research approach helped in applying generalizations to the selected problem, so that the researcher could gather insight information related to the topic. Moreover, the researcher used the case study approach to augment the study and triangulate the data. For the purpose of this project, the researcher used this method to strengthen the integrity and confidence in the conclusions drawn from the results. The case study strengthens the project by providing authentic data. The researchers Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, (2013) described these qualities of case studies and their usefulness in such a project.

The case study was structured in such a manner that exploratory qualitative research techniques are included for the purpose of literature analysis and the interview analysis. Further, in this capstone the qualitative data refer to the interviews and primary data of the research, while literature and case study provide additional data useful for this the research. These data produce more authentic and credible results (Gass & Mackey, 2013). Interview methodology provided a descriptive detail of the role of the superintendents the have been identified in the past studies. All of these data sets were used for triangulation (Helping, 2013).

Data Collection

Qualitative methods were adapted for collecting the relevant and up-to-date data for analysis. Chacko (2013) suggested that in qualitative inquiry secondary data

is information extracted from the existing and current literature on the topic. Primary data are the qualitative data taken through interviews. The interviews were conducted from the respondents through a semi-structured method. The researcher informed the respondents about the interviews and provided them with the informed consent before carrying out the interview.

Primary data are known as investigative data and are referred to as the carrying out of research and the findings extracted from first hand data (Creswell, 2009). The investigation of the role of school superintendents in district turnaround was analyzed in the primary research of this capstone project through interviews. The main impacts were then identified by an analysis of primary research. A focused approach was used for this research. The researcher then used these data in order to analyze the information. Through this, the researcher has been able to summarize the study (Miller et al., 2012).

The main aim of the secondary research for this project was to gather historical data for raising the arguments on the role of school superintendents in district turnaround. The most relevant literature included the previous case studies, different publications, articles, data from databases, etc. Secondary research not only focused on the academic papers, but also on the case studies from practical fields. These sources provided a basis of data collection for investigation on this research topic. Moreover, the help of secondary research has identified the research objectives, which further supported this research by providing knowledge of the case from an academic view. Since this research is about the role of school

superintendents in district turnaround, the secondary research focused on the role already completed by the superintendents and new roles assigned for the purpose of development. This focus helped in developing a framework to use for the analysis of the primary research (Miller et al., 2012).

Data Analysis

For the purpose of qualitative data, content analysis was used. For the purpose of the superintendents, survey quantitative data were used. Focused group interviews were used with volunteers from the superintendents' group, which helped in drawing the perceptions and the experiences of the respondents of the study. For the construction of the study, the researcher involved specific procedures (Seidman, 2012) applied content analysis.

Since the researcher completed the interviews and observations, they were decoded and analyzed carefully. There was an attempt to eliminate any sort of vagueness from the interviews. Clarification to the participants was the priority. Furthermore, the researcher also eliminated the errors, vagueness, and irrelevancy from the gathered data. This elimination helped in making the research more credible and authentic (Erickson, 2012).

The researcher used a case study in order to develop a detailed analysis for developing a more complete understanding of the district and the superintendent's role in district turnaround. As a result, more accurate and authentic results were identified. The researcher for the purpose of case study used Lee County School District in Kentucky. To analyze the literature, the researcher used the method of

content analysis and, therefore, developed authentic research. The researcher triangulated the results from all available data sets, which increased the authenticity of the capstone project.

Population Group or Focused Population

Lee County School District is a K-12 public school system serving approximately 1,100 students with over 75% of the students participating in the free and reduced lunch program. The district has two elementary schools, a middle school, and high school. Lee County is experiencing a declining and older population, with U.S. census data showing a population decline from 7,916 in 2000 to 7,339 in 2009, with 80% of the population over 18 years of age. A key contributor to the demographic shift is the economic status of the region. Lee County is located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, which, while being one of the most scenic parts of Kentucky, is also one of the poorest counties in the United States. The economic situation, as shown in Appalachia, FY 2011 (from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011), has Lee County labeled as distressed. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) states that the reasons behind this definition include these statistics related to Lee County:

1. Holds 19.6% of the total poverty rate of U.S.
2. Unemployment rate is 13.5% of the average three-year rate of U.S.
3. Just 48% of the U.S. per capita income.

Along with this, the statistics of Lee County from the 2010 census also show the average per capita income of Lee County in 2009 was just \$11,448, whereas the average national per capita income was \$27,041.

The population 25 years and over that have a high school diploma is 62.8%, while the national average is 84.6%. Local Kentucky Core Content assessment data for Lee County Schools indicated a steady decline at the high school level. Both reading and mathematics scores showed a decline from the 2007 to 2010 school years, with mathematics scores starting and ending at lower levels than the reading scores.

The above highlights the need to implement the turnaround process through effective leadership. Therefore, the researcher used the population of the Lee County School District as a case study for implementing strategies identified in the research related to the role of the superintendent in successful school and district turnarounds.

Reliability and Validity

The effectiveness exhibited by a research study or the capstone project is dependent on its validity. For ensuring validity, it is important for researchers to take a number of steps. Many different factors influence the validity of the research. One factor is the false opinions of participants. If the respondent in the study will not participate honestly in the interviews and therefore will not provide unbiased answers, the validity of a research study has suffered. The role of the researcher is crucial in this regard since he or she can take care of the results by ensuring the respondent who gives honest data will not harm participants in any way (Yin, 2009). When the

respondents in the study have less information about the basic purpose of the research, they are generally hesitant for giving honest responses. They develop myths that their administrators, teachers, managers, or others in order to judge them or collect information about some situation conduct interviews. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the reliability of the data from the respondents, literature, and all the other resources of research and study (Chacko, 2013).

For the purpose of this research, the subjects surveyed were informed that the researcher conducted this research on independent basis and for academic purposes only. Informed consent was provided to the respondents of the surveys. According to the informed consent, the participation was solely dependent on their willingness, and therefore they are allowed to withdraw from the study if they felt any kind of insecurity. In order to ensure the validity of the findings of the study, the researcher adopted the method of cross-examination. For the purpose of the cross-examination, the researcher used more than one method of data collection, which was helpful in avoiding research errors. In this research, the primary analysis and the data supported by the secondary data and therefore reliability and the validity of the research has been ensured.

Ethical and Confidentiality Considerations

Research ethics have been identified as a set of guidelines, systems, and policies that are essential to consider in order developing a neutral research. Research ethics focus on the positive outcomes of a study for the researcher, as well as for the

overall society. By the use of research ethics in a study, the results and the outcomes of the project are more dynamic and useful (Erickson, 2012).

The researcher has safeguarded that the identity, name, or any other personal information of the participants was not revealed in the study. The researcher also obtained consent of participants prior to data collection. Other important factors, regarded as the criteria of selection, are relevance to the topic and date of publication. It was the primary responsibility of the researcher to use all up-to-date sources of data. Similarly, the interviewees were ensured a comfortable environment in which the interviews were conducted. These methods helped in significantly increasing the credibility of the collected data (Gallacher et al., 2013).

Another matter of concern regarding the validity, reliability and the ethical consideration for this study was to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Furthermore, it was ensured that the information provided by the respondents be only used for the purpose of the informed research (Gallacher et al., 2013).

Informed Consent

Informed consent is another important aspect of ethical consideration while carrying out a study. The study included a process known as informed consent. According to research ethics, it is universally important for all researchers to inform and educate the participants about the purpose of research (Coast et al., 2012). Informed consent helped respondents to make free decisions about their participation in the study (Seidman, 2012). In this study, there was no pressure on the respondents to be a part of the study.

The researcher implemented a number of steps to make sure that each participant was provided education regarding the topic of the study, so that they were in a position to make a decision. The respondents voluntarily participated in this research. Moreover, they have the will to disconnect themselves from the study if they are not satisfied from the purpose of the research. Informed consent is helpful in removing the bias of the study and consequently ensuring its authenticity.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

Case Study: Turnaround Process – Lee County Schools

The role of the superintendent has expanded in school districts. The Lee County School District serves approximately 1,100 students in grades K-12: one high school (9-12), one middle school (6-8), two elementary schools (K-5). The superintendent may lead to the establishment and operations of a modern, systematic school district, improving the level of instruction district-wide. The responsibility of ensuring policy and procedures and school district accountability is that of the superintendent. The superintendent is also the representative of the district and is responsible for addressing concerns of the Board of Education, students, parents, staff, community, and stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need to develop a vision and mission, which will help in the implementation of vital decisions related to the strategic planning process.

The process of the turnaround is based on the statement that the efforts will be made to move the bottom 5% of schools in Kentucky to the top 25% within an identified period. Therefore, there is a need to work on the process of turnaround by developing the effective role of leaders in the district. For effectively implementing the process of turnaround in Kentucky, there are certain characteristics that have to be met. These characteristics are identified in Persistently Low Achievement Assessment Recommendations/Findings for Lee County. Further analysis of these characteristics and responsibilities are listed below.

Superintendent Responsibilities – School Turnaround

The major responsibilities of the superintendent in this context will be:

1. Development of the essential initiatives for the district along with the strategy, for ensuring the availability of the required capacity levels of education in the Lee County School district and in compliance with Kentucky Department of Education, for overtaking and managing the underperforming school.
2. To work with partners locally and at state and national levels, for ensuring the implementation of intense adaptations that are established to ensure students are successful in schools within the Lee County School district and college and career ready.
3. Ensuring partnerships and collaborations with other superintendents for optimizing the transformation of schools, and safeguarding a flawless transition carried out for all the stakeholders involved.
4. Administration of the performance of all the Lee County schools. This Superintendent in the case study did recruit new school staff and removed ineffective staff and leaders of schools in the district. These steps undertaken under the label of managed system to transform the schools.
5. Ensuring the availability of firm socio-emotional systems that may include wrap around services for school students and their parents.
6. A superintendent is responsible for leading the design strategy and ensuring the implementation of effective plans across the state and district for carrying out effective transformation in schools. For this, the superintendent must have an

unbending approach towards the ability of students to learn, and requires a thorough promise for making sure that the public education is improved, especially in low-income communities (Kwalwasser, 2012).

Strengthening the Role of Superintendents in School Turnaround

It is important to consider the former school record of the superintendent in other positions held previously when initiating effective school turnaround strategies. In this case, the superintendents will have relevant and proven records of accomplishment, helping in producing the desired results for Lee County School District. The Superintendent of the Lee County School School was the former Principal at the High school and was recognized nationally when holding that position. When going through the Leadership Assessment in Lee County his previous record was examined closely. These elements together proved to be beneficial to Lee County School District as assurances that courageous initiatives taken across the state schools under programs to be developed for Kentucky Department of Education.

In this regard, the skills and the expertise, which are foremost required in the superintendent, include:

1. The superintendent should have firm orientation to accountability and outcomes.
2. Initiative to take action, sense of bearing the impact and mold accordingly and influencing the change.
3. The management should be tested and the high performing teams should be developed whose performance will be measured against pre-defined benchmarks.

4. The experience of the superintendent should be proven when it comes to strategic planning.
5. The problem solving skills should be high and proven.
6. The candidate must have professional experience in leading services and operations in a school, or in a management related to any educational institute.
7. Experience in education administration is also required as a major potential skill to bring successful school turnarounds.
8. Experience in school planning, data assessment and organizational change.
9. Prioritizing, balancing and completing multiple projects through different methods is also required in a superintendent.
10. The superintendent must be ready to travel approximately 30 percent of the time (Litfin, 2007).

The model superintendent for any district and state must have the above-mentioned skills and abilities. Moreover, combination of the following professional and individual properties must also be there: a) spirit of entrepreneurship, b) grit and stubbornness, c) suppleness, d) aptitude to perform across chronological “boundaries” to bring accomplishment, and e) an inexorable focus on bringing best possible outcomes for all the school students (Leithwood, Harris & Strauss, 2010).

Analysis of Superintendent’s Role in Kentucky District

A review of low performing school districts and the attributes of the superintendents who led them through changes known as turnaround processes found that there are common roles of these successful school leaders (Fairchild & DeMary,

2011; Herman & Winters, 2010; Kwalwasser, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2010; Papa & English, 2011). Table 3 includes a list of those roles with an additional list of findings and recommendations from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) in a recent evaluation of Lee County Schools. As part of an evaluation of Lee County Schools, identified as a persistently low achieving (PLA) school district, five characteristics identified for improvement: use of data, collaboration, commitment, monitoring, and communication (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011). Four of these five KDE findings and recommendations are also part of the list of roles for effective superintendents in the turnaround districts cited above. These are: use of data, collaboration, commitment, and communication, further strengthening the argument that effective use of these roles can help strengthen a low achieving school.

Table 3

PLA Assessment Recommendations/Findings and Superintendent's Role

PLA Assessment Recommendations/ Findings for Lee County	Superintendent's Role
Use of Data	Use of Data
Collaboration	Collaboration
	Vision
Commitment	Commitment
Monitoring	Culture
Communication	Communication
	Community Support
	Systemic Change
	Building Capacity From Within

The researcher surveyed 173 Superintendents in the State of Kentucky. From the survey sent out, 50% responded. Sixty percent of those responding were male;

twenty percent were female. The majority of respondents were in 0-5 years' experience level.

The respondents ranked the following from greatest importance to least in terms of success for school turnaround. Vision was ranked as the most important with 40% while systemic change was ranked the least important with 30%.

Table 2

Q 3 Rank from greatest to least importance to school turnaround.

RANKINGS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Use of Data	5	14	12	14	5	13	10	8	4
Collaboration	1	7	9	8	13	22	21	12	6
Vision	35	12	8	11	5	4	5	1	4
Commitment	11	15	13	12	12	6	6	7	3
Culture	10	11	16	12	17	7	6	3	3
Communication	13	10	14	17	9	12	4	2	0
Community Support	2	4	3	4	6	6	14	22	22
Systemic Change	5	9	4	4	7	4	7	19	26
Building Capacity from within	3	4	7	4	13	12	15	9	18

In thinking about their district, Superintendents were asked to rank in order what they thought were the five barriers to student learning. Percentage wise, Lack of parental

participation in their children's education was the biggest barrier to student learning by those responding with a percentage of 48%.

Table 3

Q 4 In thinking about your district, please rank in order the five barriers to student learning with 1 being the biggest barrier and 5 being the least barrier.

Barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of Parental participation in their children's education.	42	16	7	13	7
Teacher's knowledge of content.	14	10	14	15	32
Student Apathy	12	34	16	12	11
Negative culture of the school.	12	13	20	22	18
Poor classroom Management.	5	12	28	26	17

From the respondents, 56% of the Superintendents were from districts with less than 2500 students enrolled. 26% of the respondents were from districts with student populations of 5001-10,000 while 17% had populations of more than 10,000.

Summary of Superintendents' Responses to Questionnaire

Following the anonymous survey given to Kentucky Superintendents, the researcher conducted focus group interviews. Some of the respondents shared their personal experiences with their school and district's success and failures. Over 40%

stated that vision was the most important factor in school turnaround, and one explained that by revising their vision statement multiple stakeholders were able to be involved with the direction their school system wanted to be headed in the next 3-5 years. Superintendents also said that the focus of work at the schools centered on that vision statement, and each move that is made within a system must include the vision in the outcome. Several superintendents discussed that monitoring with feedback was also key.

Communication was the next most important factor in success, and some effective practices mentioned, including email, Facebook, Twitter, and memos from the school. Most of the superintendents stated that there were no ineffective communication practices as long as communication was present. However, the quality of communication was most important.

Commitment on behalf of the educators was essential according to the group interviewed. One superintendent stated that people will live up to or down to expectations, and the key is to create a vision, equip and empower staff, and support them with feedback. The “Me” and “We” mentality was crucial to commitment, according to one of the interviewees. Commitment is established when someone chooses to work with others for an overall good rather than just themselves profiting.

All the superintendents interviewed stated that data drive everything. Using data that are established and validated will improve instruction and create more success for the students. In this researcher’s experience as superintendent of schools, data have to drive everything from instruction to finance. I communicate with

stakeholders early and often to ensure the best decisions are made for our school district.

After conducting the focus interview group, it was noted that superintendents, in general, have the same beliefs and attitudes about most of the topics questioned.

Setting Up a Vision for Lee County School District

There is a need to identify the vision for the purpose of school turnaround. In order to identify the objectives, the team vision should be collective in nature. It is important to set the vision so that the staff can work collectively. It is also helpful in setting up the school environment. The school superintendent defined the vision of the Lee County School District and explained that during the process of turnaround, the expectation of the parents and students are higher and reiterate that every student, regardless of background, can achieve the highest levels. A district must believe that there is a need to expand the life of the students by creating a system that prepares all students for success in college and career. It can be seen from extracurricular activities like football, basketball, archery, cross-country, golf, tennis, volleyball, and softball, etc.

Furthermore, there is a need to set strategy that ensures the orientation of teachers. From the past examples of school turnarounds, the researcher observed that for a successful process of turnaround, the district should work as an organization fueled by teachers. The success was observed from various activities in the schools. The superintendent of the school should make all possible efforts to enforce the

systematic approach for developing the school, based on student-centered organizations.

Findings

The intent of this capstone was to examine the role of the superintendent in district turnaround. There is a need to change the school culture and to develop the positive norms for the students and the teachers. School leadership and the school superintendent support the relationship developed between the teacher and the student and respect the importance of it in the process of turnaround. Addressing the norms on a smaller scale and building the capacity of the teacher will also enhance the students' performance.

Decisively, the role of the superintendent in turnaround districts requires an unyielding sense of drive and determination. Throughout my research the following characteristics of the effective superintendent's role in turnaround districts were found in both surveys and interviews: problem solver, data analyzer, collaborator, communicator, being a visionary, and a systems thinker. However, this is not an all-inclusive list. Many superintendents bring a sense of individualism and personality to the position. Overall, one must have a tough skin and must have the potential to do what is necessary to increase student achievement every day for every child.

Moreover, it was noted that in many other successful examples that the culture of schools and the role of school superintendents can bring a broader vision for the development. The school culture should be changed by trying to introduce more effective strategies like building student/teacher relationships, enhancing the school

environment, and students' activities/clubs. These measures will enhance the relationship of the students with the teachers and with the school. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school superintendent to work with the culture of the schools, setting up helpful unified strategies and vision for the whole district turnaround.

The change is brought in two primary domains, which are school culture and student performance. A school is due for a turnaround if the student performance is deteriorating and if the school is negatively influenced by external factors. The role of superintendent reflects all the authorities and the responsibilities that he or she possesses. Educational leadership is an issue that has become increasingly important in recent years, both in the educational research agenda internationally and in public policy. It is widely believed among political players and the public that educational leaders can make a difference in the quality of schools and education of children. The reformation of vision of the school is very important since it drives the future of the school's progress. The superintendents influence the change in culture of the school, which is followed by significant changes in the student performance levels.

Data analysis is completed under the supervision of the school superintendent to carry out the required changes. It is much like making a forecast of the future strategies related to the process of school turnaround. Educators must create their own turnaround. The school environment and culture influences the performance of students. There are schools in the country that do not have the minimum conditions for the development of educational activities. Many students study without light, with broken desks, blackboards deteriorated, and damaged bathrooms. In the expert

opinion of the phrase “as how you live, you think” accurately reflects the situation of students in our midst. In this sense, the environment in which the child develops affects their intellectual, emotional, and moral growth. If a student attends classes in an environment that is not welcoming, it is likely that they will perform poorly and eventually lose interest. Similar is the case with the capacity building of teachers.

If the school culture is not supportive for the teachers, it seems likely that they will fail to sustain their teaching capacities, decreasing the learning capacities of students as a result. The interviewees also mentioned that the role of superintendents in establishing effective relationships with district level leaders is very important. The foundation must not be taken advantage of, nor must any role be ignored deliberately, neither by superintendents nor by the district level leaders. A major requirement is to deal with all implications effectively. The implications occur when the district level leaders are not interested any more, when the cultural and student performance changes are not maintained; hence, meager grounds are made for implementing plans and when the communication gap occurs between leaders and school management. The school superintendent ensures the involvement of every stakeholder so that the progress cannot just be brought, but can also be sustained. Superintendents who responded to the survey depicted a successful school turnaround as one in which the performance levels of students are enhanced significantly on a scale. The quantifiable measurements are the real benefits that show the progress rates of a school and help in future developments too.

Survey Information of Superintendents

Like the superintendent, the principal is an integral part of change in a school. The prime focus of superintendents in any process of school turnaround is on the school principal. The replacement of the roles of principals is a major point in the school turnaround process. The process of school turnaround means to change the fate of the school by bringing change in a variety of systems. The school culture, providing a foundational support for all other changes, is the element that occurs first in school turnaround process. The steps that the superintendent takes defines his or her the role in bringing successful changes to a school. The reshaping of schools' beliefs and norms is the next important step taken by the school superintendent. The alignment of newly reformed school beliefs with the beliefs of the students is a must, since students are the most primary stakeholders of a school.

It is important to train teachers according to their deficiencies as an integral part of the turnaround process. The training of teachers enhances the teaching capacity of the teachers and thus consequently results in increased learning capacities of the students. In the Lee County School District, Professional Development was planned intentionally for individual teachers to address any areas where there were weaknesses. When the learning capacities of the students are increased, student performance starts to improve; it can then be said that the process of school turnaround is moving in the right direction.

Unresolved underlying issues and implications for turning around districts can prove to be a double-edged sword for the school superintendent. Major problems

arise when there is lack of trust between the district level leaders including principals, counselors, central office personnel, school personnel, and school superintendents. Lack of understanding results in a situation in which the district level leaders, upon change in roles and relations, do not communicate their concerns to the superintendent, and thus ignore their roles. The unfamiliarity of roles means that a cessation of improvement has been introduced in the whole process of school growth. In the end, for ensuring a successful school turnaround process, it is important for the school superintendent to take care of every step very closely and systematically. This can be made possible by gathering, reviewing, and analyzing data on weekly and monthly basis, rather than annual basis. The understanding levels must be firm between all the leadership levels and the communication gap must be eliminated. The integration of the goals of the school staff and that of the students with the vision of school is very important, since this enables the teachers to understand the needs of the students.

The importance of district level leadership is also worth discussing in the context of school turnarounds. The school superintendent influences district level leaders since they are brought into action upon the call of school superintendents. The district level leaders serve the schools intentionally. Engagement of district level leaders in the schools' activities and their participation in the hierarchical changes is significant. Together, superintendents of schools and district level leaders drive the whole change in schools. Leading the change is a complex procedure for the school superintendents.

For ensuring success, the environment is first changed. The external factors that are identified as negative are removed and the school culture makes it more convenient for the students to participate more actively and readily. A positive school culture not only helps children, but also helps the teachers. Building the capacities of both teachers and students is very important in order to ensure that all efforts bring positive results and that the aim is achieved. The communication between stakeholders and the school superintendent and district level leaders is very important since its presence ensures that all the steps are in alignment with the newly reformed beliefs and vision of the school.

The survey given to the superintendents by the researcher shows that data analysis is necessary for keeping a sound track of the progress of the schools. Data must be gathered on a regular basis and must be assessed frequently in order to decode the minimum and maximum spikes of progress. Data should be gathered through direct methods such as surveys, test scores, parents' suggestions, and the analysis of teacher needs. Teachers are trained under the supervision of school superintendent, ensuring all the deficiencies of teachers are eliminated, so that the capacities of teachers can be built. An expert and competent superintendent handles situations quite easily by maintaining a practical environment that suits all the stakeholders associated with the schools. Increased communication levels have helped significantly. The gap has decreased because of enhanced communication levels, which has allowed concerns to be conveyed directly to the superintendent. It is the effective strategy of a school superintendent that brings change in the culture of

the school and consequently enhances the productivities of students, increasing their performance levels and academic achievement.

Effective communication between the superintendent of schools and district level leaders is very important since the change in roles can cause conflicts. The environment should be such that concerns can be raised comfortably, which helps in active resolution of the issues. In the district used for the case study, an open door policy was enacted with no repercussions for any disagreements during the turnaround process. Trust is another important factor that should be present throughout the process of school turnaround across a district. The importance of all roles and relationships should be respected throughout the turnaround process to move the school into the category of a top performing school in the district. The replacement of principals helps in change of roles, bringing more creativity to the procedures that are important for a sustainable change. A successful school turnaround process is one in which the reformed beliefs and vision of the school are in firm alignment with the requirements of all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Educational leadership is an issue that has become increasingly important in recent years, both in the international educational research agenda and in public policy. It is widely believed among political actors and the public that educational leaders can make a big difference in the quality of schools and education of children (citation). Therefore, in order to carry out the successful process of school turnaround, change in the school system must give greater autonomy to schools in their decision-making powers (citation). In this way, they can adapt more easily to the changing environments and respond to the needs of modern society more accurately. International research has identified that successful leadership has the potential to impact on learning outcomes of students. In the extensive review of quantitative studies, the impact of leadership has been analyzed on academic outcomes (Moore et al., 2012).

Priority should be given for implementing a challenging classroom environment and confidence for all to learn. It is important that planning and teamwork be incorporated for turnaround in the district to occur. Development methodologies should be present as well as the use of traditional educational resources and technological strategies and permanent and timely feedback for schoolwork, as well as involving parents in the learning process of their children. There will always be a need for the progression of vision and collective goals for the district and all the staff.

It is especially important to offer training and education to enable teachers' articulated preparation and interdisciplinary teaching. The school superintendent can effectively observe and participate with this leadership during the process of turnaround. This practice contributes directly to improve and optimize the time spent on teaching and learning in the classroom (Sa & Thompson, 2005). In this way, efforts were to be made by the management for institutionalization of planning and pedagogical practices that integrated different learning areas and subsectors. Moreover, proposing and testing different activities in line with the skills, previous knowledge and interests of students, and information gathering and data assessment are key factors that play a vital role in successful school turnaround. From this study, it is possible to point out some issues and strategies for the training of teachers. It is necessary to assist and support teachers by initiating programs to help them recognize and accept the differences of children within their classes. The past studies have revealed that poor leadership could produce the opposite effect, leading to weakened schools and consequently decreasing the academic results of the students. Moreover, it is important to act in a unified manner around the core purpose and the beliefs and vision that guide the system of an educational organization. One of the central focuses of this capstone is to present all the evidence that was collected on the ability of educational leadership, i.e. the role of school superintendents (Leithwood et al., 2010).

The performance of students in schools is affected by the quality of schools and the presence of first-line managers such as school superintendents, since they

have authority to take certain actions in the processes of decision making and policy development combined with other factors such as a stable faculty and trained and motivated teachers. This will not only enhance student performance but also will be helpful in the district turnaround (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2012). The positive role of the school superintendents can be helpful in accessing the performance on the school and the district level. The successful and effective role played by the superintendent on the school and system levels can be important in developing a successful process of school turnaround.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the superintendent to emphasize the school contributes significantly to the process of learning of the students. This is an achievement regarding the turnaround process of schools in district performance and quality of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. It requires commitment and institutional conditions that combine management that is driven by instruction. A proper school culture effectively validates the involvement of parents and public policies. It allows school management to engage to their schooling and teaching processes effectively within the classrooms (Schaffer et al., 2012).

Recommendations

Frequent assessment and data evaluation. The challenge facing schools is quite rigid, and there is a need to increase the flexibility levels in educational organizations, including the alteration of the school environment according to the culture of success. Therefore, in order to meet objectives, there is a need to carry out the process of performance evaluation of students and collect the data on regular

basis, as well as collecting the data annually. There is a need to evaluate the data in the basis of monthly evaluation. It has been found that frequent assessment is a factor associated with good performance, so that the more the students are evaluated, the better performance is expected due to the feedback provided. Further, strategies like formative assessment on weekly basis can be carried out within the school or classroom environment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the superintendent to implement such strategies in the district. This is a monitoring piece that is expected districtwide and those results are used to increase student achievement and more effective classroom practices. This strategy explains and analyzes the performance of students. The comparison of the results of each grade every year, within their immediate environment, generates a political debate about the state of education in each school of the county/district and regional inequality.

The fundamental objective is to describe how students in different grades meet the requirements of their curriculum areas, especially in math and reading. The evaluation was given priority over the analysis of the capabilities and skills. This will enable children to communicate, interact, and operate adequately with the teachers. Some teachers develop activities that are associated with achievement. Therefore, in evaluating students' performance, there is a need to carry out comprehension activities. For example, in mathematics, there is a need to conduct frequent exercises that affect student performance. It is the responsibility of school superintendents to promote and strengthen teaching practices to improve learning opportunities for all

the students. It is aimed to support, monitor, and evaluate both class preparation and classroom practices for improving learning rates according to the needs of students.

The timely and systematic use of the results of performance of students and evaluation of internal and external school achievement by the school superintendent can be helpful in improving the results and develop the strategies accordingly. When this practice is installed as a central concern of the work with teachers, it is possible to identify the performance of low-grade achieving students.

In order to develop the building capacity of the teachers, it is important to facilitate conversation between the superintendent and the schools. Moreover, it is important for the superintendents to serve as the conduit for information to the schools and community. Furthermore, for improving the building capacity of the teachers, there is a need to develop training programs and strategies for students' meaningful engagement. There is a need to understand the effective role of teachers in this regard along with the need to seek help from community, parents, and all the stakeholders so that the best methods can be used for the process of school turnaround. Moreover, there is a need to conduct training sessions focusing in staff development in order to align them with collective vision and strategic development.

Furthermore, the engagement of students in the whole turnaround process of district is very crucial. Principals of the school are important characters for bringing the positive change in terms of leadership. Therefore, support from immediate management of schools is important while considering the district turnaround process. Along with this, a collective strategy is important at the district level in

order to implement successfully the process of district turnaround. There is a need to implement and restructure the macro level activities of the schools equally in the whole district. Following are the factors that can be distinguished accordingly and are dependent on skill building and the capacity development of the teachers.

Their teachers who work collaboratively and are more committed to the school characterize good schools, in terms of increased student performance. There is a need to conduct certain activities that will develop association of the students with the teachers. Moreover, there is a need to carry out the trainings of the teacher and these trainings conducted as the reform process while considering district turnarounds. Further, it has been found that schools where teachers have higher expectations of their students are also schools where students achieve better performance (Riggio, 2009). Therefore, there is a strong need to encourage commitment and teamwork of teachers within the school environment.

In addition to behaviors discussed above the teacher develops a number of teacher characteristics that are associated with the performance of their students. Further, principals with more successful experience in senior management, and training, initial or continuing on management and organization are leading schools with better students score better controlled by adjusting variables. Therefore, there is a need to train the teachers and the principal of the school; hence training the teachers and students accordingly should be the part of the strategy by the school superintendents, which should be equally implemented in all the schools.

Both the number of computers in schools and the volumes in the school library, controlled by the size of the school, are associated with student performance, so that the better equipped the school is with computers and books, the more students are able to earn top scores both in reading and math.

Schools having high student performance levels give a prime focus to the instructional time. However, it has been found that overall time in schools, if not dedicated to teaching, will not enhance the performance of the students. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the superintendent to train principals and teachers accordingly so that they can use the maximum class time in teaching and providing something productive to the students. In the Lee County School District, the expectation is to teach bell to bell, maximize instructional time and minimizing any interruptions during the school day.

Teaching time alone is not enough to explain the differences in student performance, teaching activities also matter. The study has also focused on the time of preparation of lessons by teachers associated with the performance of their students. The responsibility of the superintendent in this regard is to equally train the teachers for this purpose. It is the responsibility of the school superintendent to incorporate teacher education, teaching strategies, and the use of technological resources in the classroom. Moreover, proper attention is needed, in particular, for preparation and planning practices of teaching. Increased investment in teaching resources and adequate facilities to the teaching and learning process implemented by

the school superintendents in the vision will also enhance the process of school turnaround.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to promote the participation and involvement of parents and community in the educational process of their children. Actions and programs must be offered to support parents from home to handle cultural changes in order to understand and support their learning processes. The burden of socioeconomic and cultural conditions of communities confirms the need to continue to focus on education policies at the district level. Policies like these help to compensate the differences in cultural capital of students, enabling access to quality education and experience, especially those who come from the poor families.

Conclusions: Identified Strengths, Weaknesses and Sustainability

In conclusion, as researcher of this capstone and the superintendent of the LCSD, I was able to identify the following strengths.

1. Alignment K-12, partnership with our area technology center,
2. Dedicated staff,
3. Committed community members,
4. Strategic plan,
5. Accreditation,
6. District TELL Committee,
7. Policy and procedure set forth by KSBA,
8. District communication plan,
9. District newsletter, Website,

10. Email list-serve, and

11. School messenger system.

Each of the items listed above provide outreach to our students, parents and community. Additionally, board agendas and minutes are published monthly for public view. Our board members have high expectations and set the tone for our district. They expect results and want the best for our kids. We have a committed staff k-12 that believes in our kids. We all work daily to ensure all students graduate college and career ready. In order to ensure a successful turnaround in the district, I welcome stakeholder input at all times. Included are goals for Lee County Schools developed by stakeholders from our strategic planning team.

Lee County Schools Strategic Plan Goals Developed During the Turnaround:

K-PREP Elementary

Goal 1: Lee County Schools will increase the averaged combined reading and math K-Prep scores for elementary and middle school students from 38.0% in 2012 to 72.0% in 2017 as measured by state delivery targets.

K-PREP Lee County High School

Goal 2: Lee County High School will increase the English II and Algebra II End of Course (EOC) from 41.9% in 2012 to 71.0% in 2017 as measured by state delivery targets.

GAP Groups

Goal 3: By 2017, Lee County School District will increase the average combined reading and math proficiency ratings for all students in the non-duplicated gap groups (free/reduced lunch) from 34.36% to 67.2%.

Graduation Rate

Goal 4: Lee County schools will raise the graduation rate as determined by Kentucky Department of Education by a minimum of 2.8% each year for reporting years 2013-2017 and will establish a "No Dropout Zone" in Lee County during this time period.

College and Career Readiness

Goal 5: Lee County Schools will increase the percentage of students graduating college and/or career ready from 42.4% to 80% by June of 2017.

Culture

Goal 6: District stakeholders will work collaboratively to develop a strong learning culture for students as measured by a decrease in truancy, dropouts, behavior referrals and achievement gaps as well as an increase in the number of proficient and college/career ready students to meet established state goals by May, 2017.

Personnel

Goal 7: The Lee County School District will develop systems/strategies to ensure 100% of administration and teachers are highly effective as measured by student achievement and TPGES data to meet college and career readiness by 2017.

Finance

Goal 8: Each fiscal year, manage district fiscal resources efficiently and effectively, creating a balanced budget with a contingency of 2% or more to meet established District and State goals.

Areas of Strength

Strengths include our board members who represent a wide variety of stakeholder groups. Our board chairman is a director-at-large for the Kentucky School Boards Association and has been appointed by the governor to serve on the Committee for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. He has also received the 2013 Warren H. Proudfoot Award for Outstanding School Board Member at the KSBA Conference.

All Lee County Schools' policy and procedure are approved by the Kentucky School Boards Association and posted on our website. Lee County Schools also has an employee handbook developed by KSBA in which all employees are required to read and sign. Our superintendent serves on local, state, and national committees and organizations. Schools are governed through site-based leadership. The high school currently has an advisory council. The superintendent requires all central office staff and principals attend board meetings for the purpose of reporting and monitoring data and happenings across the district. Weekly instructional leadership meetings take place in order for open continual instructional conversations to happen.

Monthly parent community breakfasts are held to provide the opportunity for stakeholders to voice concerns, provide suggestions and ask questions. Lee County

Schools also hosted a district booth at the annual Woolly Worm Festival which included information about our strategic plan, communication tools, and email sign up for stakeholders. We also worked with the Kentucky Center for School Safety S.T.O.P pledge and provided story boards from the district and all schools. The booth provided another opportunity to reach out and share information about the great work our schools are doing for kids. Many staff are members of local civic groups such as women's club, Shriners, fire department, chamber of commerce and Kiwanis. We believe in giving back to the community.

Actions to Sustain Strengths

Implement goals from the strategic plan, listen, practice transparency, communicate, and monitor implementation with fidelity in all systems.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Update and define specific roles and responsibilities of all members of the system.

Implementation of systems at all levels.

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

Work to develop and grow relationships, practice transparency, communicate and monitor at all times.

Actions to Sustain Strengths

Implement goals from the strategic plan. Vertically align curriculum, listen, practice transparency, communicate, and monitor.

Areas in Need of Improvement

Implementation of systems.

Plans for Improvement

Work to develop and grow relationships, practice transparency, communicate and monitor at all times.

Areas of Strength

Lee County Schools' curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide teacher effectiveness and student learning. A primary drive for the district is to provide a rigorous, relevant curriculum for all students as determined by a positive environment between students, teachers, leadership and stakeholders. Lee County Schools are in an on-going process of development of curriculum (both horizontal and vertical) and assessment in CIITS. Kentucky mandated test data (K-Prep, EOC, etc.), district purchased standardized and norm reference tests, as well as Discovery Ed. (ThinkLink) continuous progress monitoring assessments are used to form instruction.

Lee County has been involved in TPGES and PPGES as a pilot district for three years. We are in our third year as a Gates Integration Grant pilot district focusing on LDC and MDC staff development. Asbury University provides a mentoring program for new teachers and aspiring leaders. All schools develop and use a 30-60-90 day action plan as well as their CSIP to drive the instructional program. All Lee County Schools are considered "high progress" schools based on 2012-2013 test data. Principals, teachers and district personnel do use ELEOT classroom observation form during walkthroughs in the district.

Through GEAR UP Lee County has a mentoring program for students and by students that we hope to refine and grow each year. Schools have a formal structure where students are known by at least one adult advocate in the school and that adult supports the individual student's needs.

Lee County principals and instructional supervisor meet monthly in a PLC to discuss, develop and evaluate programs and processes that will improve instruction. All schools have regular PLCs' and/or team meetings during which improvements in their grade/subject areas are key areas of discussion and implementation. The third edition of the Lee County Strategic Plan was developed in 2012 with help from parents, community leaders, students, teachers, district leadership and college and career personnel.

Actions Needed to Sustain Strengths

We need to continue to monitor, evaluate and improve those programs and/or processes that we deem to be strengths on a regular basis across the district. Emphasis on data to drive instruction must be ramped up to achieve even more growth. School and district leaders must put more emphasis on the monitoring of instructional practices. Schools and the district must continue to engage families and other stakeholders in meaningful ways to keep them informed of the teaching and learning process.

Areas in Need of Improvement:

As indicated in Lee County Schools need to work on common assessments and grading (standards based grading) across the district. As we are a very small

district, this is sometimes difficult as some schools have only one teacher per grade level or one teacher per subject level in each grade. Often one teacher may be teaching the same subject at multiple grade levels. As in our district must be more consistent in the monitoring and adjustment of our professional practices. Written processes/procedures must be refined regularly and used across the district. Fidelity in the implementation of the instructional process in support of student learning must be emphasized.

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

Lee County School Districts plans to regularly develop, refine and implement the policies, processes and procedures needed to maximize student and staff achievement and growth. Schools and district staff will develop, implement and review consistent, in-depth professional development plans based on teacher/administrator professional growth plans in order to improve our instructional strategies. PD 360 will assist us in meeting individual professional growth needs as well as continuing to send individuals to pertinent out-of-district trainings. Lee County School's resources and support system make every effort to meet the needs of the students, faculty, and community to ensure safety, support, and equitable resources to all schools, and district departments while operating within the budget. Standard 4 addresses support systems which includes support staff, instructional time and materials, facilities and maintenance, technology and media, as well as educational and support programs.

Lee County Schools District offers a variety of resources and support systems. Our schools exhaust every option to secure materials and fiscal resources to meet the needs of students and staff.

1. The ability to offer Physical Education, Music, and Art to all schools
2. Additional staffing beyond SBDM allocations
3. All faculty members are highly qualified
4. Lee County is involved in various pilot programs
5. Instructional time is protected, monitored, and used effectively
6. All buildings regardless of age and size are well maintained
7. Current Strategic Plan and Master Facility Plan
8. The support of many college, private companies, and organizations/agencies to assist with the wellness and educational programs
9. Lee County Area Technology Center strongly focuses on preparing students to be college and career ready
10. Transportation and food service work efficiently and have a skilled workforce
11. Special needs programs are well organized and serve the students to meet all needs and state and federal guidelines.

Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength:

The district will continue to seek funds for programs, as well as outside resources to enhance/continue our current programs. As stated above, the Board feels that the consolidation of schools will enhance and maximize resources. As enrollment is declining we are determined to continue our commitment to current programs by

using our staff in more creative ways. School tax rates have been increased to help support our district. We will continue to guard our instructional day and calendar year to optimizing student achievement. Technology, transportation, food service, and facilities will continue to operate efficiently and stay within allotted budget and try to offer quality services to students and staff while always looking for cost-saving initiatives.

Areas of need

1. Written procedures and policies were not evident in all systems
2. Technology and media constantly changing so Lee County will strive to provide funding to keep the technology infrastructure updated
3. District needs to refine agreements with several community and state agencies
4. District needs to refine systems for counseling, referrals, educational and career planning.

Lee County Schools have processes but yet lack many written processes and systems to give supporting evidence for several systems and resources.

Plans for Improvement in Areas of Need

Lee County Schools will develop policies, systems, and written procedures on all areas which have been identified through this assessment process. The district team will focus on areas for improvement and refinement whereby these documents are in a usable format and meet the needs of the resource and support system standard. As a district team, we feel that during this process Lee County Schools have gone through a cultural change of schools being independent entities to all schools and leadership

becoming a team working together for all. Lee County School District implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a wide range of student data used to guide continuous instructional improvement. At the high school level ACT, COMPASS, KYOTE, KOSSA, ACT Work Keys and ASVAB are used to determine students who are college/career ready. Kentucky state assessment (K-Prep), End of Course in accountable and non-accountable subjects, EXPLORE, PLAN, Discovery Education, and teacher assessments are utilized to monitor student progress and determine student growth. In addition to the annual state assessments - K-Prep and EXPLORE - the middle school administers EXPLORE in 7th grade, STAR, Discovery Education and teacher made assessments to monitor student progress. The elementary schools administer state assessments in grades 3-5, STAR, Discovery Education, teacher made tests and Stanford 10 in grades K-2 (Indicator 5.1). Discovery Education is administered three times per year in grades K-12 and the results are analyzed after each administration to determine strengths/weaknesses and RtI groupings.

Actions to Sustain Areas of Strength

The District will continue to administer assessments in non- accountable grades and continue efforts that allow data analysis and monitoring by leadership and staff. Principal PLC and administrative meetings will focus on assessment, achievement and sharing of information in order to build upon a consistent instructional foundation.

Areas in Need of Improvement

The District needs to develop a written process for systematically evaluating the student assessment system. Processes are in place and discussed at administrator meetings, but no written processes are available. Teachers and administrators need more intense training on the analysis of assessment data and monitoring of individual growth. District and school personnel need to be creative in scheduling and using data to meet the individual needs of students.

Plans to Improve Areas of Need

District and school personnel will need to develop a written process of administering assessment and a systematically evaluation process. Additional PD needs to be available on connecting the assessment data to instructional changes. There needs to be a direct focus on individual students and meeting students where they are - not where we think they should be.

REFERENCES

- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 1*(3), 385-405.
- Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000). *Breaking the code of change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Bennis, W. G., & Biederman, P. W. (1997). *Organizing genius: The secrets of creative collaboration*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.
- Blanchard, K. (2006). *Leading at a Higher Level*. Nashville, TN, United States of America.
- Blanchard, K. H. (2010). *Leading at a higher level: Blanchard on leadership and creating high performing organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Needha Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G., & Lash, D. (2007). The turnaround challenge: Why America's best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst-performing schools. Executive Summary. *Mass Insight Education*.
- Chacko, T. V. (2013). Use of qualitative analysis to supplement program evaluation of a faculty development program. *Archives of Medicine and Health Sciences, 1*(1), 67.
- Chen, H. (2012). *Approaches to quantitative research: A guide for dissertation students*. Cork: Oak Tree Press.

- Clifford, M. (2013). Learning to lead school turnaround: The Mississippi LEADS Professional Development Model. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 8(1), 49-62.
- Coast, J., Al-Janabi, H., Sutton, E. J., Horrocks, S. A., Vosper, A. J., Swancutt, D. R., & Flynn, T. N. (2012). Using qualitative methods for attribute development for discrete choice experiments: Issues and recommendations. *Health economics*, 21(6), 730-741.
- Comprehensive school reform program*. (2004, December 2). Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/compreform/2pager.html>
- Conboy, K., Fitzgerald, G., & Mathiassen, L. (2012). Qualitative methods research in information systems: Motivations, themes, and contributions. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 113-118.
- Cottrell, D., & Harvey, E. L. (2004). *Leadership courage: Leadership strategies for individual and organizational success*. Dallas, TX: Walk the Talk.
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Duffy, F. M. (2006). Step up to excellence: A protocol for navigating whole system change. *TechTrends*, 41.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. E. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

- Duke, D. L. (2012). Tinkering and turnarounds: Understanding the contemporary campaign to improve low-performing schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 17(1-2), 9-24.
- Duke, D. L., Carr, M., & Sterrett, W. (2012). *The school improvement planning handbook: Getting focused for turnaround and transition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Elmore, R. F. (2007). *School reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Erickson, F. (2011). Qualitative research methods for science education. In B. J. Fraser, K. G. Tobin, & C. J. McRobbie (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Science Education* (pp. 1451-1469). New York: Springer.
- Fullan, M., Hargreaves, A. (2013). *The power of human capital*. Retrieved from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/JSD-Power-of-Professional-Capital.pdf>
- Gallacher, K., Morrison, D., Jani, B., Macdonald, S., May, C. R., Montori, V. M., & Mair, F. S. (2013). Uncovering treatment burden as a key concept for stroke care: A systematic review of qualitative research. *PLOS Medicine*, 10(6), e1001473.
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2013). *Stimulated recall methodology in second language research*. New York: Routledge.

- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods, 16*(1), 15-31.
- Glickman, C. D. (2002). *Leadership for learning: How to help teachers succeed*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Herman, R. (2012). Scaling school turnaround. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), 17*(1-2), 25-33.
- Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Green, J., Maynard, R., & Redding, S. (2008). *Turning Around Chronically Low Performing Schools*. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf
- Hess, F. M. (2013). *Cage-busting leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Hoekstra, P. Z. (2010). Strategies for leading a change. In K. Blanchard (Ed.), *Leading at a higher level*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Blanchard Management Corporation.
- Hoyle, J. R. (2007). *Leadership and futuring: Making visions happen*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Jehlen, A. (2012). Boot camp for education CEOs: The broad foundation superintendent's academy. *Rethinking Schools, 27*(1), 29-34.
- Johnson, S. M. (1996). *Leading to change: The challenge of the new superintendency*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kentucky Association of School Administrators (2013) www.kasa.org

Kentucky Department of Education. (2010) *School Report Card*

Kentucky, State of. (2012). Persistently low-achieving schools, Kentucky Revised Statute §160.346.

Kowal, J., Hassel, E. A., & Hassel, B. C. (2009, September 15). *The center for comprehensive school report and improvement*. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforsri.org>

Kutash, J., Nico, E. Rahmatullah, S., Tallant, K. (2010). *The School Turnaround Field Guide*. FSG Social Impact Advisors.

Leithwood, K. (2012). Turning around underperforming school systems: Guidelines for district leaders. Paper commissioned by the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Retrieved from http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10063916/h/Pre-Conference/CASS_Research_Paper_3_Leithwood_Turning_Around_School_Systems.pdf

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Leading school turnaround: How successful leaders transform low-performing schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- McGuinn, P. (2013). The federal role in educational equity. *Education, Justice, and Democracy*, 221.
- McManus, P. (2006). *Coaching people: Expert solutions to everyday challenges*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Middleton, K. E., & Petitt, E. A. (2007). *Who cares? Improving public schools through relationships and customer service*. Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark.
- Miller, T., Mauthner, M., Birch, M., & Jessop, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller-Williams, S. L., & Kristonis, W. A. (2010). A systems approach to comprehensive school reform: Using the realms of meaning and the Baldrige Model as a synthetic framework. *National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal*.
- Muhammad, A., & Dufour, R. (2009). *Transforming school culture: How to overcome staff division*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Muijs, D., & Chapman, C. (2013). School turnaround through collaboration: A mixed methods study. *American Education Research Association Annual Meeting*. San Francisco, CA.
- Myers, M. D. (2013). *Qualitative research in business and management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- No Child Left Behind. (2004, August 4). *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/no-child-left-behind/>

- O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). 'Unsatisfactory Saturation': A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 13(2), 190-197.
- Perpetuating Excellence in Teaching Leadership and Learn. (2011). www.petll.com.
- Peck, C., & Reitzug, U. C. (2013). School turnaround fever: The paradoxes of a historical practice promoted as a new reform. *Urban Education*.
- Riggio, R. (2009). *Pygmalion Leadership: The power of positive expectations*.
- Rosborg, J., McGee, G., & Burgett, J. (2003). *What every superintendent and principal needs to know: School leadership for the real world*. Santa Maria, CA: Education Communication Unlimited.
- Sa, S., & Thompson, S. (2005, December). Strategies: Reculturing for all means all. *Panasonic Foundation Series*, 11(1), 1-12. Retrieved from: http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/White_Papers/Strategies/StrategiesFall05Final.pdf.
- Schaffer, E., Reynolds, D., & Stringfield, S. (2012). Sustaining turnaround at the school and district levels: The High Reliability Schools Project at Sandfields Secondary School. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 17(1-2), 108-127.
- Schmidt-Davis, J., & Bottoms, G. (2012). Turnaround high school principals: Recruit, prepare and empower leaders of change: High schools that work. *Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)*.

- Seidman, I. (2012). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Thompson, S. (2005, December). Reculturing for all means all. *Strategies for School System Leaders on District-Level Change*, 11(1), 1-2.
- Vander, A. T. (2011). *Getting smart: How digital learning is changing the world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Wagner, T. (2010). *The global achievement gap: Why even our best schools don't teach the new survival skills our children need--and what we can do about it*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wimmer, R. D. (2012). *Mass media research*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Zavadsky, H. (2012). *School turnarounds: The essential role of districts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire Focus Group and Anonymous Electronic**ROLE OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IN DISTRICT TURNAROUND**

1. Forty percent of Superintendent's surveyed said vision was the most important factor in School Turnaround. How do you use vision in making decisions in your daily activities and how does vision impact your district?
2. What are some effective and ineffective Communication strategies you use in your district?
3. How can culture be changed from toxic to positive?
4. How does commitment on behalf of the educators in your district play a part in your district?
5. How do you use data to make decisions? (Personnel, financial, socioeconomic) or.....What data is least important that you have and what data do you not have that you want?
6. In the survey, Community Support was judged to be the least important factor in school turnaround. What is your opinion on community support in the turnaround of a district and/or school?

Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. What is your gender?

_____Female

_____Male

2. How many years have you been superintendent?

_____0-5

_____6-10

_____10 plus

3. Rank most to least importance skills needed by superintendents for school district turnaround.

_____Use of Data

_____Collaboration

_____Vision

_____Commitment

_____Culture

_____Communication

_____Community Support

_____Systemic Change

_____Building Capacity from Within

4. Which of the skills listed in question 3 do you feel most prepared to lead?

5. Which of the skills listed in question 3 do you feel least prepared to lead?

6. Listed below are 5 barriers to student learning. In thinking about your district, please rank order the barriers with 1 being the biggest barrier and 5 being the least barrier.

_____ Lack of parental participation in their children's education

_____ Teachers' knowledge of content

_____ Student apathy

_____ Negative culture of the school

_____ Poor classroom management

7. School System Size

_____ School System Size Less than 2500

_____ 2501 to 5000

_____ 5001 to 10000

_____ 10001 to 25000

_____ 25001 or more

8. List any skill that may not be referenced in the survey.

9. Please record any other comments in the space below.

VITA

JAMES EVANS, JR.

Date of Birth: July, 28, 1968
Place of Birth: Ypsilanti, Michigan

EDUCATION

May, 1992 Bachelor of Arts
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky

May, 1999 Master of Arts in Education
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky

Pending Doctor of Education
Morehead State University
Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

July, 2008-Present Superintendent of Schools
Lee County
Beattyville, Kentucky

HONORS

September, 2004 Life Saving Events
Lee County Fire Services
Beattyville, Kentucky